

SMOKE
THE CELEBRATED
"PIONEER"
SWEETENED TOBACCO,
KNOWN ALL OVER THE
WORLD.
MANUFACTURED BY THE
RICHMOND
CAVENDISH CO., LTD.,
AT THEIR
BONDED WORKS,
LIVERPOOL,
AND
Retailed by all first-class
Tobacconists at Home and
Abroad.

PEARSON'S

TO INTEREST,
TO ELEVATE, TO AMUSE.

WEEKLY.

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Tobacconists at Home and
Abroad.

No. 336.]

TRANSMISSION AT
BOOK HATES.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 20, 1896.

ENTERED AT
STATIONERS' HALL.

[PRICE TWOPENCE.]

BOVRIL

AS A BEVERAGE
Is Meat and
Drink at one
draught,
invigorating
the healthy, and
strengthening
Invalids.



BOVRIL

IN THE KITCHEN
Adds piquancy
and
nourishment to
Soups, Sauces,
Gravies,
Hashed Meat,
and all
made dishes.

HAVE YOU A POST-CARD ?

If not, please obtain one, and send it to the

PEARSON POTTERY COMPANY, HANLEY,

with your name and address on the back, and you will receive by next post full particulars of the most wonderful
package of crockery the world has ever seen.

**100 PIECES
FOR £1 1s.**

A Dinner Service of 30 pieces
is included, which is guaran-
teed to be worth the guinea
alone, and a China Tea Service
of 20 pieces finished in gold,
together with a lot of useful
kitchen crockery.



This is the pattern
of the
DINNER SERVICE.

THOUSANDS
SOLD ALL OVER
THE WORLD.

Post-cards and Letters to be addressed to the

PEARSON POTTERY COMPANY, HANLEY, STAFFS.

Cadbury's

COCOA

NO
ALKALIES
USED.

Cocoa is more than a mere stimulant and refreshing drink, it is also
a nutritious food, and one of the most precious gifts of nature—
sustaining and invigorating the system probably more than any other
beverage. The *Lancet* refers to Cadbury's as "the standard of highest
purity at present attainable."

MELLIN'S FOOD

For INFANTS
and INVALIDS.

*Mellin's Food when prepared is similar to
Breast Milk.*

SAMPLES POST FREE FROM

MELLIN'S FOOD WORKS, PECKHAM, S.E.

YOU CANNOT BE SURE THAT IT IS GALLAHER'S "TWO FLAKES" TOBACCO.

YOU ARE BUYING UNLESS YOU INSIST ON GETTING IT
IN THEIR 1, 2, OR 4 OZ. DECORATED TINS,
SECURED BY PATENT BAND.

WHARFEDALE MIXTURE HOMESPUNS.



PER
YARD.
44in. Wide.
46in. Wide.
48in. Wide.
50in. Wide.
52in. Wide.
54in. Wide.
56in. Wide.
58in. Wide.
60in. Wide.
62in. Wide.
64in. Wide.
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68in. Wide.
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72in. Wide.
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78in. Wide.
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82in. Wide.
84in. Wide.
86in. Wide.
88in. Wide.
90in. Wide.
92in. Wide.
94in. Wide.
96in. Wide.
98in. Wide.
100in. Wide.

CHARMING XMAS PRESENTS.

CAMPBELL'S Gold Medal

MELODEONS

With Organ and Celestial
Chords, and Charming Bell
Accompaniments.
NO MORE SHOULD
BE WITHOUT ONE.
The perfect Piano, the sweet
melodious Organ, the cheerful
bell, and the merry Dance,
all are played on these
charming instruments. No
knowledge of Music required.
The best companion for the home and first-
class during the winter evenings.

SPECIAL OFFER to the Readers of
"PEARSON'S WEEKLY."
Campbell's "Miniature" Melodeon " 6/6
Campbell's "Piano" Melodeon " 10/6
Campbell's "Favorite" Melodeon " 14/6
Campbell's "Grand" Melodeon " 18/6
The best value sent, send T.O.D. for the amount.
Immediate delivery paid to St. Britain & Ireland.

100,000 TESTIMONIALS.
Professors repeat, the Campbell Melodeon Player
"Gives British, English, and Welsh, says: "Camp-
bell's Patent Melodeons are the finest instruments
I have ever seen under my touch, and they only
require a trial to advertise themselves."
All kinds of music should be sent word for our New
Illustrated List for 1897. 15/000 of
these valuable lists sent out yearly. Send Penny
Stamp to CAMPBELL'S & CO., 112, Regent Street,
London, W.1, for the amount.
Established 1850. Agents of working imitations.

ROBINSON & CLEAVER, BELFAST.

And 170, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.

CAMBRIC LINEN

POCKET COLLARS, CUFFS,

HANDKERCHIEFS AND SHIRTS.

DELICIOUS WHOLESALE REFRESHING.

Prepared in silver-lined pans. Highly prized by all. Flavoured with Ripe Fruit Juices.

DR. GORDON STABLES, R.N., says: "Jellies that really add to our health and luxury."

S. CHIVERS & SONS, PROPRIETORS OF THE FIRST ENGLISH JAM FACTORY, HISTON, CAMBRIDGE.

CHIVERS' PATENT CUSTARDS and

BLAND MANAGES - 21 and 24 packets and

24 boxes - two more delicious and digestible additions

to the dinner and supper table. Made by simply

adding milk and boiling.

CHIVERS' FIRST PRIZE JAMS.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture, in its

report, 1895, says: "Messrs. Chivers' Factory at

Histon... is now well known throughout the country

for the excellence of its manufacture."

JELLIES.

FRUIT SEEDS ROSES

Nothing so profitable and
easy to grow.
30 Acres of Saleable Trees.

THE BEST PROCURABLE.

List Free.

HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS.

Bushes in variety. Packing and

Carriage free for Cash with order.

5/- per doz., 50/- per 100.

All other Nursery Stock

carriage forward.

IN POTS From 15/- a doz.

Ornamental Trees, 51 Acres.

A Superb Collection of

Herbaceous Plants.

Four Acres of Gladioli.

Gladioli 60,000 from 15/- doz.

N.B. - Single Plants are sold at

slightly increased prices.

GENERAL CATALOGUE

(Over 170 pages) of Nursery Stock,

artificially produced, containing

some hundreds of illustrations,

and full of valuable information on

free on receipt of 3d. for postage.

Please mention this paper.

RICHARD SMITH & CO., WORCESTER.

SUPERSEDING

PETTICOATS.

'KALS' Improved

Knickerbockers for Ladies.

McCALLUM & CO. 3/11

Flymouth. Style also current worn. Post free.

FITS CURED

From the first dose of

Ovarine fits come. It is the only

cure for Epilepsy. It has cured thousands

when everything else failed. 6d. 1/-.

Money returned if Ovarine fails. Free samples

of Ovarine.

MR. NICHOLL, Pharm. Chem.,

25, High Street, BELFAST.

H. SAMUELS WONDERFUL MARVEL WATCH

10/6

AN EXCELLENT, HARD-WEARING WATCH IN

STRONG, CLOSELY-FITTED CASES OF SPECIAL

MATERIAL PREPARED TO RESEMBLE IN

APPEARANCE REAL SILVER, CRYSTAL GLASS

FRONT. ACCURATE TIMEKEEPER. FOR-

WARDED FREE BY POST WITH KEY, INSTRUCTIONS

AND H. SAMUELS' SPECIAL FREE

BONUS GIFT ON RECEIPT OF KEY

H. SAMUELS' SPENDID "ACME" WATCHES FOR

LADIES OR GENTLEMEN. THREE QUARTER

PLATE MOVEMENT. EXTRA JEWELLED. EX-

AMINED AND ADJUSTED TO PERFECT

ACCURACY. PROTECTIVE DUST-EXCLUDING

CAP. IN SOLID STERLING SILVER CASES OF

EXTRA WEIGHT. GOVERNMENT STAMPED.

LADY'S SIZE, RICHLY ENGRAVED AND WITH

DIAL BEAUTIFULLY TINTED OR PLAIN AS

PREFERRED. WARRANTED FIVE YEARS.

FORWARDED WITH KEY, FULL INSTRUCTIONS

AND HANDSOME FREE BONUS GIFT

TO ANY ADDRESS ON RECEIPT OF H. SAMUELS'

PRICE, 25/- A MONTH'S FREE TRIAL AL-

LOWED.

OR A LETTER, A NEW AND BEAUTI-

FULLY ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE,

2,000 HANDSOME ENGRAVINGS,

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL DESIGNS,

FRESH FOR THIS SEASON, AND

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME SHOWN

FOR 1896-97. FINEST ARTISTIC

PATTERNS, BRIGHTEST AND BEST

GOODS, FRESH FROM THE DE-

SIGNER'S HANDS. UNPRECEDENT-

ED REDUCTIONS. FACTORY

PRICES. HUNDREDS OF TESTI-

MONIALS. FULL LISTS OF

H. SAMUELS' FREE BONUS GIFTS.

VALUABLE & USEFUL PRESENTS.

THIS SPENDID VOLUME IS SENT

ON APPLICATION TO ANY ADDRESS

GRATIS AND POST FREE.

H. SAMUEL,

Largest English Watch Manufacturer,

97, 99, 101, 33, 35, & 121, Market St., Manchester.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS And Everything in the Musical Line.

Any of the following Catalogues can be had
for the asking and will cost you nothing.
Catalogue A - For Violins, Cellos, Basses,
Double Basses, Trombones, Clarinets,
Saxophones, Flutes, Piccolos,
Drums, Jew's Harps, Bells, Fiddles,
Singing and all kinds of accordeons.
Catalogue B - For Pianos, Zither Banjos,
Banjos, Guitars, Autoharps, Mandolins,
Sitaras, and Pianos.
Catalogue C - For Musical Boxes, from
1s. 6d. to 210s. special Boxes, with
interchangeable cylinders, double
springs, time sets, and indicators,
and a regulator, silent winder, and
all latest improvements.
Catalogue D - For Musical Mechanical
Organs, Harmoniums, Accordeons,
Trombones, Heliconas, Symphoniums,
Melodeons, German and Anglo Con-
certinas, Musical Albums, Sigsbee,
Singer, Wey, Collins, Lida, Frantz,
Blanc, &c.; Tambourines, Sleigh
Bells, Chimes, Ocarinas, Fairy
Bells, Mouth Harmoniums, Toy
Symphonies, Kazoos, Japanese
Fiddles, Autoharps, and all accor-
dions. Part I. Pianos; Part II.
American Organs and Harmoniums.

Thousands of Customers say so.

JOSEPH RILEY & SONS,

ON CONSTITUTION HILL, BIRMINGHAM.

Best and Cheapest House in Kingdom.

"KEEPUMDRIE"

WATERPROOF GARMENTS.

Marvels of Cheapness and Durability.

CHESTERFIELD - FROM

SCARBORO' - Men's - 7/6

INVERNESS - Boys - 5/-

Illustrated list and patterns post free.

ANDREW POTTER,

London Works, READING.

7/8 SALOON GUN WITH 100 7/8

BALL CARTRIDGES.

100 Birds or Rabbits can be killed

with this gun at a cost of 1s. Will

penetrate a one-inch deal board

mark. Each gun bears the legal proof

above. Send for price list, giving full

particulars of above. W. H. JACKSON, Wholesale Arms and Ammu-

nition Manufacturer, TOTTENHAM, Middlesex. Men-

tion Furnace Works.

MOUSTACHES

Heavy and Light.

SPEDILY PRODUCED.

HAIR PATCHES

ERADICATED BY USING

ESAUINE.

Testimonials Daily.

POST FREE (secretly packed) in

British Isles.

1/6, 2/6, and 5/- from

A. KNOWLES & Co.,

30, Newgate St., E.C.

HAVE YOU A COLD?

DR. MACKENZIE'S

CATARH CURE

SMELLING

BOTTLE

Effectually cures COLD

in the HEAD, IN-

FLUENZA, AND NERVOUS

HEADACHE; instantly relieves

HAY FEVER and NEURALGIA

in the HEAD. The best remedy for FAINT

NESS and DIZZINESS.

Sold by all chemists and Druggists.

Price One Shilling.

Post Free 12 stamps, from

Mackenzie's Care Depot,

Reading.

Refuse Worthless Imitations.

THE FAVOURITE WINTER SWEET. Largest Sale in the World. SKUSE'S HERBAL TABLETS



One Ounce Packets, 1d.

At Court and Cottage for Twenty Years

SKUSE'S HERBAL TABLETS

Have been welcome.

Familiar to

Princes, Poets,

Speakers, Sing-

ers, and Cele-

brities all over

the globe.

Recommended

by Physicians,

used in our Ho-

pitals and simi-

lar institutions

everywhere.

Prepared from

the finest An-

iseed, Horse-

bound, Colts-

foot, Cassia,

Peppermint,

&c.

Canisters 3d. each, 3 post free, 1s.

They are positively unequalled as a

choice, piquant, and valuable Con-

fection.

The Sweets For Excellence.

DEVONA. This charming Sweet

is made from Fresh

Clotted Cream.

CHOCOLATE DEVONA.

This is Chocolate in its most delicate

form as a sweetmeat.

Sold Everywhere, in 1d. & 2d. Pkts.

HOW TO PATENT AN INVENTION.

Book giving full particulars as to Cost, Form, &c.

Post Free. CASSELL & CO. (Patent Agents),

22, Glasshouse Street, Finsbury Circus,

London. Inventors assisted. Consultation

Advice Free.

Don't Cough - use

They at once check the Cough

and remove the cause.

The Unrivalled

One Lozenge alone relieves.

Sold everywhere, Tins 12d. each.

Keatings Lozenges

Cooper
Cooper
ARE NOW SELLING
Some & Co. LTD
Extraordinary Teas
Cooper & Co. Ltd. have the honor to announce that they have now received the
of back free of charge. Send for 1/6 post free to London.

THIS IS THE CHRISTMAS WEEK DOUBLE NUMBER OF P.W.

PEARSON'S

TO INTEREST
TO ELEVATE, TO AMUSE. WEEKLY.

No. 336.]

TRANSMISSION AT
BOOK RATE.

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 26, 1896.

ENTERED AT
STATIONERS' HALL.

[TWO PENCE.]

BEFORE THE TOY-SHOP WINDOW.

I KNOWS it's mighty weak in me to cry
'N' blubber like a baby, sir, but I
Kurn't help them tears.
I'm old enough, I s'pose, to put away
Sech childish things; I've known the light of day
Some sixty years.

It's this way, sir, 'bout thirty years ago
I had a little baby boy, named Joe—
Named after me—
For Joe's mamma, afore she came to die,
Ast me to name him that ar way, and I
Just did, you see.

Small Joe—well, he was three weeks old that day,
When she—she—kind o' sighed 'n' passed away,
'N' me and Joe
Was left to help each other on—for me
To keep the little fellow goin'; he
To soo he my woe.

He did it, too, Joe did—he did a heap.
'Twas mighty comfortin' to watch him sleep,
'N' coo, and smile.
I seemed to see her smile, when Joe looked glad,
'N' then I didn't seem to feel so sad
A little while.

'N' then Joe went! I had to go to town,
'N' Joe while I was gone crept off—to drown—
Fell in a dam;
'N' while in town I'd bought a little toy
To bring it home, y' know, to give the boy—
A woolly lamb.

'N' when I got back home some feller said,
As kindly as he could, that Joe was dead—
My little Joe;
'N' with him was that woolly lamb that I'd
Brought home yer know.

'N' now to-day's the first I've cried since then—
Cried like a baby in the sight o' men—
But 'taint no whim.

Why in the winder o' that shop there sat
A little woolly lamb, sir, just like that
I got for him.

A HOTEL RUN BY DWARFS.

ONE of the most remarkable hotels in the world is one which is situated in a place called White Plains in the State of New York. This hotel is managed entirely by dwarfs. The proprietor is Admiral Dot, who was at one time well known in circus and theatrical circles. He is thirty-two years of age, and only two and a half feet tall. The barman is a little taller than the proprietor, and has also been on exhibition in museums and similar places.

The proprietor is assisted in his duties by his wife, who is thirty-one inches tall, and is said to be the prettiest dwarf in the whole world. The tiny couple have a two-year-old daughter, who is only twenty inches high, and promises to be as small as her parents when she matures. Still another little fellow is the head waiter in the dining-room, who is twenty-nine and a half inches tall. All of them talk both English and German, and run their affairs in a way which makes competitors envious.

Besides being an active member of several secret and benefit societies, Admiral Dot is a first assistant foreman in the fire department, and is always the first at the engine-house when the fire bells sound the alarm. He wears the regulation fireman's suit, and has won his way from the ranks in the fire department through his bravery and good work. There is a strange fatality connected with the family of which Admiral Dot is a member. For four generations there has been a dwarf in each generation, always of the male sex and without an exception bearing the relation of uncle and nephew.

The first of the little people was a certain Wolff, who was an extensive owner of wine cellars in the large vineyards in the northern part of Germany, on the Rhine. He died a short time ago from natural causes. His nephew, the second of these diminutive members of the human race, named Jacob Holz, was a well-known dwarf lawyer, and enjoyed a large practice in his native town in Southern Germany.

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AT the right and left hand top corners of the front page of *Pearson's Weekly* cover will in future be found two coupons. These coupons will appear every week during the whole of 1897. They will also appear in *Short Stories* and *Home Notes*.

WHAT TO DO.

Procure as many of these coupons as you possibly can. Once you get them keep them safely. Either paste them on to slips of paper, or into an exercise-book. The main thing is to get and to keep them.

WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT.

Because we are going to give £100 to the reader who collects the greatest number of these coupons from *Pearson's Weekly* and *Short Stories*;

ANOTHER £100

To the reader who collects from *HOME NOTES*;

ANOTHER £100

To the NEWSAGENT who collects from *PEARSON'S WEEKLY* and *SHORT STORIES*;

ANOTHER £100

To the NEWSAGENT who collects from *HOME NOTES*.

Readers must not collect newsagents' coupons, and they should lump P.W. and *Short Stories* coupons together. *Home Notes* Coupons are to be collected separately.

£400 In Cash Prizes £400

If you do not want this money for yourself you can nominate someone to whom it would be useful. Perhaps you have a poor relation; perhaps you know some deserving charity; perhaps you know some poor crippled child or bed-ridden old man or woman, to whom £100 would be a god-send.

It need not cost you anything beyond a little trouble to earn this money for them. All you need do is to induce the people who read *Pearson's Weekly*, *Short Stories*, and *Home Notes*, to give you the coupons from their papers. If amongst your friends there are not many who read these three papers, then worry them until they do read them. Explain the reason, and don't be put off with promises that may never be fulfilled. Buy the papers for them; collect the money and the coupons at the same time.

£400 In Cash Prizes £400.

If you go the right way to work about it, it will not be difficult to induce people to read such interesting papers as *Pearson's Weekly*, *Short Stories*, and *Home Notes* undoubtedly are.

One Hundred Pounds is a big sum to earn for, say, an hour's work a week, fifty-two hours in the year, six working days at eight and a half hours a day.

£100 for a Week's Work.

FOUR PEOPLE WILL GET £100 EACH.

No coupons are to be sent to us until January 1st, 1898.

A WORRYING THOUGHT.

"PLEASE, sir, give me a calendar," said the small boy, as he looked at the shopman over the counter.
"We don't give calendars to children," replied the man.

"Why not?"
"Oh, because children haven't any use for them."
"That's all you know. I've got use for one now, an' I want it bad. I've laid awake three nights a-worryin'."
"Humph? What is it you want to know?"
"I want to find out how many more Christmusses is goin' to be spoiled by comin' on Sunday."

AND A VERY GOOD REASON TOO.

"DID the boys carry off your gate on Christmas Eve?" asked McSwellington. "They did mine."

"Oh, no," replied Squidding.
"Then I suppose it is one of the kind not readily taken off the hinges?"

"No. It is easily lifted off."
"Then you must have taken the precaution to put it in the cellar?"

"No. I did nothing of the kind."
"What made the boys let it alone?"
"I think it was due to the fact that the gate was attached to a bull-dog by four feet of chain."

GRUESOME GAMBLING.

WHEN Tommy Atkins was in the Soudan recently he amused himself during the hot season with an original game of chance called "Taking the temperature." As nearly everybody had a slight touch of fever, a mouth thermometer would be borrowed from a surgeon, and the temperature of each one taken.

Each man would put up a small stake, and the one having the highest temperature would take the pool!

The winner would sometimes need a temperature as high as 102 Fahrenheit, which speaks for itself. It is a good illustration of the recklessness possessed by the average British soldier, and the philosophical way in which he takes his troubles.

HIS MOTHER WOULD DO.

THE Duke of Sutherland presented a park to one of the pottery towns. The opening was a big event, and the Prince of Wales was asked to perform the ceremony. A deputation waited on the Prince accordingly, a wealthy and worthy magistrate being spokesman.

"Honest old John" was noted less for Court-like demeanour than for being large-hearted, rough-and-ready, and real Staffordshire. Unfortunately, His Royal Highness was unable to comply.

"I should have been most happy," said he, "had I known sooner."

"Canna tha spare half a day just to show thy face?" said the worthy fellow. "We shall look fules when we get back." But the Prince was inexorable.

Much disconcerted, the deputation seemed at a loss how to proceed. Suddenly an idea struck their resourceful leader, and, turning to the Heir Apparent, he said:

"Well, if tha canna come, send thy mother."

NOBODY condemns more loudly the vulgarity of punning than the man who doesn't see the point of the joke until everyone else has laughed.

LIES CHARGED EXTRA.—Old Maid (to messenger): "Give him the letter, and if he asks you who sent it just say 'a beautiful young lady.'"

Messenger: "I shall have to charge you a shilling more for that."

"Isn't the country air perfectly lovely?"
The modern girl shrugged her shoulders coldly, rejoicing:

"Oh, I don't know! I had my tyre inflated with it this morning, and I don't notice much difference."

It will be noticed we have omitted all the regular features this week to make room for more seasonable matter. P.W. will resume its familiar appearance next week.

A SONG IN PASSING.

BY ABRIE FARWELL BROWN.

SIGNORE IL PRIMO TENORE was tired and very cross. The afternoon had been most trying. At his practice hour the piano was out of tune, the accompanist had played abominably, and he half suspected that he himself made a false note. Whereupon he had called the luckless Celestina by some very hard Italian names, and, seizing his hat and coat, had started out for a walk in the Avenue to refresh his sullied feelings.

As he walked along in the clear, cold winter air, noting how people paused to look at him, nudging one another as the young singer passed, his spirits slowly rose. He was very handsome, was Il Tenore, and the ladies were always wont to ere him admiringly, even when they did not know that his broad chest could send forth one of the finest voices in the world.

Il Tenore was forgetting all about the opera which was to come off that night, forgetting the unpleasantness of the afternoon, his hatred of the robustness of bass and his jealousy of the new *secondo tenore*. He was forgetting Verdi and Meyerbeer and Gounod, and



contending himself with the beautiful weather and the comfortable feeling of being alive and strong and well and good to look upon. Now he need be no languishing troubadour, no ill-starred Huguenot, nor even a bereaved lover; but just an ordinary man like all the others—only handsomer.

Il Tenore was smiling softly to himself at the wide-eyed looks of admiration in the faces of two pretty school-girls, who had just passed him, when an unwelcome sound struck upon his sensitive ear. The smile faded from his lips, and a frown wrinkled the complacent forehead as his eye caught sight of the obnoxious piano-organ and the quaint little figure which was "making the music go."

Il Signore strode angrily to the kerbstone. "Basta!" he cried in fierce Italian to his humble little compatriot, "why do you shriek at me that horrible tune? Why do you sound it to me—to me, Il Tenore? Cielo! Do I not hear it often enough? Do I not work over it night and day, and must I always hear when I would forget for a moment? Ah, must I not sing it to-night—that note which drives me crazy—Corpo di Bacco! It is maddening!"

The poor little Italian maid had begun to cry at the first angry tones of the grand gentleman who spoke the only words she had understood since morning. But such unkind words!

"I did not know, Signore," she began. "Bah! You did not know. Well, take yourself off. I will give you this not to sound that tune to me again," and he thrust half-a-crown towards the girl, who was drying her eyes on her green silk apron.

But the little maid did not reach forward to take the money as he had expected.

"Oh, Signore," she cried eagerly, "I played it this time as I always play it oftentimes, because I love it so. Oh, Signore, do you really sing the beautiful music?" and an expression of wonder came into her soft, brown eyes as she raised them admiringly to the tenor's handsome face.

"You love the music? You love my little aria?" he cried, half-pleased, half- scornful. "Well, my child, and why do you love it so well that you play it always on your horrible instrument, so that I must hear it as I go by? Bah!"

"Oh! Signore, it is so beautiful, so tender, so full of the great feeling. I love the master who wrote it so well, and—and I felt that I could love the one who sang it, too, if he sang it as the great master meant. Oh, I feel how he would do it!" and the little brown hands clasped themselves eagerly together on the blue silk kerchief.

"So you know how I could sing it, do you? Well, my child, you shall come and hear me, and I hope, little one, that my singing will please you as the great master's would have done," and Il Grande Tenore hastily wrote a few words on a card and handed it to the still wondering girl.

"Oh! Signore, a thousand thanks," the girl began to say fervently. But the handsome gentleman was already gone, and Bettina, looking after his departing figure, then glanced down at the bit of cardboard in her hand and breathed a quick sigh of wondering delight. Could it be really true, and was she going to hear the grand gentleman with the dark, shining eyes and the lovely long moustachios sing her song—her beautiful song?

Bettina crept between the shafts of the piano and dragged her heavy instrument to the next street. Her day's work was not ended yet, and many weary hours

must pass before that would come to pass for which her little soul was longing. But all that afternoon the tired little feet

trudged manfully over the cobblestones, and the round, weary arms turned the hard handle with new zest, and dragged the heavy machine with a back aching less than usual. For, tucked into her bodice, close over her eager little heart, she felt a magic talisman against weariness and unkindness and disappointment. But she played her favourite tune no more that day.

Bettina's father was a paper-flower maker. He had been lamed by a horse one day when he was dragging the piano with her, and since then his leg had never straightened out, so Bettina had to drag the piano and "make the music" alone. And hard work it was for a girl of sixteen. But he made the dingy room where he worked to blossom with flowers of the most intricate designs known to botany—flowers such as do not grow in cold England, nor blossom in any but the most tropic of climes; flowers of such varied hue as only an Italian imagination could recall from the gardens of its own *bella patria*.

He made little windmills, too, that spun prettily and with kaleidoscopic effect when there was just a breeze enough to fill them, but not too much to tear the mimic sails. But as this was a delightful combination of weather which London seldom vouchsafed to the little would-be buyers of windmills, the old man's trade was slender. For even his roses were viewed askance by the sceptical eyes accustomed to the frail, pale beauties of our less florid meadows. These green, purple, yellow, and blue blossoms were too impressionistic for even the English taste.

Bettina had no mother to insist upon the polite conventions of good society, nor to act as chaperon when her daughter attended the opera. So when, after their scanty supper, Bettina announced that she was going to the opera that night, her father expressed only wonder at her good fortune, and rejoiced thereat with her. For he was very fond of his pretty daughter, though he was sometimes a harsh master, and made her work very hard.

Hastily, for it was already very late, Bettina made her humble toilet, adding a ribbon here and there, and a fresh white kerchief. Then she put on a hat of gorgeous feathers and tarnished silver lace, and behold, she was attired ready to start! But first, when she was sure that her father was not looking, timidly, and blushing at her own wickedness, she stole to the box where he kept the wonderful paper roses and lilies. Bettina picked out a dozen of the very handsomest, with gold and silver centres, and wonderful green leaves.

These she tied into a huge bunch with a scrap of yellow cigar ribbon, which she had been long cherishing for Christmas. And with this crowning adornment, and feeling like a great lady indeed, Bettina put on her shawl, hiding the precious bouquet underneath, and, all unattended, stole forth to the opera.

Oh, the wonder, and the beauty, and the mystery of it all! Bettina sat like one in a trance in the seat



which the girl gave her in the side of the balcony close to the great stage. The people about her wondered at the quaint little figure in its gorgeous bonnet and red velvet blouse, with a huge bouquet of paper roses clasped close to the white kerchief. But Bettina never

noticed their smiles and glances of amusement towards her. She was in an unknown land of fair ladies and beautiful gowns, of soft lights and sweet perfumes.

Bettina had never been to the opera. Her acquaintance with the stage was limited to sundry visits to the galleries of the cheaper theatres. But this was to her a land of pure delight. She watched the surging crowd, the beautiful ladies and their attendant cavaliers, the rows upon rows of happy, smiling faces, and she knew that she, too, was part of it all.

Then came the overture—the dear, blessed music that she loved—and then, oh, wonderful! another fairy world, ever more bewildering than the one about her, was opened to her dazzled sight.

Bettina sat motionless, rigid, the tears standing in her soft brown eyes, her head bent forward with parted lips, her hands clasped close about the great bouquet. More than one of that vast audience noticed the girl sitting there alone in her great, self-unconscious delight. And their eyes moistened, too, seeing her happiness, and they wished that it was all as new to them, as real and as beautiful, that they, too, might enjoy it as a child, with all its glamour.

Then he came forth—oh, the beautiful gentleman! Her Signore in his plumed hat and velvet cloak. A prince he was, the glittering, jewelled hero of Bettina's dreams, of the fairy tales which the old Italian mother used to tell long ago in that sunny land across the sea.

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Breathlessly she watched him, the colour flushing deeper in her olive cheeks, the soft eyes growing bright and luminous with excitement as his clear voice rose high among the rafters of the great hall.

Oh, how he sang! Bettina had never heard or imagined such music as this, and her little soul thrilled with the delight of sweet sound. The beautiful ladies in their satin gowns, the jewels flashing in the soft light, the bright colours which the chorus wore, the music of the great opera itself, all these were to her but an indistinguishable blur of colour and of melody. It was all only a background to that central, glorious figure which was the essence of it all; the divine spirit of music itself; the good genius who had permitted her this taste of bliss.

So the opera went on, act by act, and Bettina sat there like one entranced, drinking in deep draughts of ecstasy.

At last, at the very end, came the tenor's grand solo. A few soft flourishes, a tremulous note of prelude, and then—her song; her own little song which she ground out day after day, and a hundred times a day, in the rain and the snow, in the cold and the heat. But it was her tune, so glorified and made perfect that to Bettina it seemed an air chanted by one of the very angels of Heaven, so flute-like was it and so clear, so round and full, so tremulously soft and tender.

It was a farewell love song which he caroled to the beautiful lady with golden hair as she stood on the balcony above. But as he finished Bettina's eyes were full of tears and her heart was lifted far above the dome of the great hall into another world, for she felt that it had been sung to her.

Yes, he sang as the master would have wished, but better, oh, better than any one but the angels could.

Then came the mighty storm of applause that awakened Bettina from her trance, and through her tear-dimmed eyes she saw the whole house wildly clapping and cheering. She heard the cries of "Bravo! bravo!" in her dear native tongue as the great bouquets fell at his feet—at the feet of the grand gentleman who sang her little song.

Then Bettina rose, and as she leaned far over the balcony, she, too, shouted "Bravo! bravo! Signore!" in her soft Italian tongue. And with all the might of her little brown arms she, too, flung her offering—the great, gorgeous bouquet—right at the tenor's feet.

He picked it up, the huge bunch of paper roses. He picked it up, smiling and bowing, and held it there before the great audience, a bewildering mass of bright colours and vivid green. There was a hush, a moment's pause, and then, thinking it some huge joke, the great hall resounded again with clapping and cheering and shouts of laughter.

But he turned and looked up at her, and singled her out from among them all for his sweetest smile and his lowest bow—her, the little Bettina, at whom the whole house was looking in laughing wonder.

And as the great curtain opened again and again at the demands of the people for one last glimpse of the great singer, Bettina saw him standing there, radiant, beautiful, holding her flowers alone to his breast, but with all the others lying at his feet.

Then the bright vision faded from Bettina's sight, and she awakened from her blissful dream of brief, unreal happiness, of light and beauty and melody, awakened into the dark night, alone.

Often, oh, often after that, whenever Il Tenore sang the little aria, he would glance instinctively up at the left-hand balcony close to the stage. But the two brown eyes were never there, brimmed full of tears, to tell him he was singing as the master would have wished.

Still the little song always brought before his eyes the vision of a quaint, small figure in kerchief and apron and blowered hat; of a sweet, olive face and glorious eyes beaming softly into his; a vision which would gradually fade and grow dim and vanish, leaving him, too, in the dark alone.

As plump as a partridge, as poor as a rat,
As strong as a lion, as weak as a cat.

BIDE A WEE AND DINNA FRET.

Is the road very dreary?
Patience yet.
Rest will be sweet if thou art a-weary.
And after night cometh the morning cheery!
Then bide a wee and dinna fret.
The clouds have silver lining.
Don't forget.
And tho' he's hidden, still the sun is shining.
Courage instead of tears or vain repining;
Then bide a wee and dinna fret.
When toil and cares unending
Are beset,
Bethink thee how the storms from heaven
descending
Snap the stiff oak, but spare the willow bending.
Then bide a wee and dinna fret.
Grief sharper stings doth borrow
From regret;
But yesterday is gone, and shall its sorrow
Unfit us for the present and to-morrow?
Nay, bide a wee and dinna fret.

ROYAL TOYS.

A VERY pretty custom of old standing prevails in the Imperial family of Germany, namely, that at Christmas and on the birthdays of the Royal children, the stock of toys belonging to them is overhauled, and those no longer in special favour are sent off to children's hospitals. The present Empress, who is the most motherly of women, never forgets the observance of this custom, packing the toys with her own hands. As the sick children are told that the toys come from the Palace, they prize them, and some interesting relics are still in existence, as, for instance, the battered tin soldiers with which the old Emperor played when a child, and an old doll, which was a favourite in the infancy of Queen Louise of Prussia.

THEY DON'T SPEAK NOW.

ABOUT a fortnight ago two women met in a tram-car, and when one complained that she was again without a cook, the other replied:
"Ah! I have a jewel of a girl! She's neat, prompt, respectful, and I only pay her twenty-five shillings a month."
"Is it possible?"
"Yes, she's from the country, and doesn't know that she can get more wages."
The same two women met in the same tram-car again yesterday, but, alas! how changed the situation. They stared frigidly at each other without even a nod, and they would not sit on the same side of the car. The twenty-five shilling jewel of a girl is now receiving thirty shillings per month in the kitchen of the woman who was without a cook. Hence the bad blood, which will descend to the third generation.

A REMARKABLE ELECTION BET.

IN connection with the presidential election this year, the most remarkable bet yet recorded is one in which the penalty stipulated is that the loser shall promptly leave the United States, and remain an exile from his native land for the remainder of his life. Both are men of prominence in the business and social circles of Milwaukee, one being an ardent admirer of McKinley and the other a follower of Bryan. People at first thought they were joking, but, in order to show that they were in earnest, they met at a prominent club and drew up a paper setting forth explicitly the condition of the bet, and then, accompanied by their friends, adjourned to the office of a prominent lawyer, who, when the signature of both men had been affixed to the contract and duly witnessed, placed upon it his notarial seal. In order to enable the loser to settle up his business affairs and make all necessary arrangements, both men agreed that the defeated one need not leave the United States before the 1st of January, 1897.

"This won't do," exclaimed Mrs. Box excitedly, "there's thirteen at table."
"Never mind, ma," shouted little Johnnie, "I kin eat fur two."

POLLY (aged six): "I really don't think, mamma, that Santa Claus is married."
Mamma: "Why not, my dear?"
Polly: "Just look at this doll he has left for me. Its dress is very evidently a man's taste."

EXPLAINED.—"Did you come out well on Christmas morning, Tommy?"
"Yeth, thir. I got more things than any of my brotherth or thiththers."
"Indeed! How did that come about?"
"I got up two hours before they did."

SOME EXTRAORDINARY PANTOMIME WIGS.

"I USED to think," said Mr. Clarkson, the celebrated wig maker of Wellington Street to P.W. recently, "that the popularity of pantomimes in this country was not likely to last over the present century. But I was wrong. There are not so many in London now as formerly, but in the provinces alone this year I supply the wigs for over fifty Christmas productions. How many altogether? Over 5,000. That basket alone contains 700. It is for one of the provincial *Cinderella's*.

"Which class of pantomime wigs gives me the most trouble to make? Those worn by the actors undoubtedly. The rivalry amongst provincial low comedians is wonderfully keen, and the ingenuity they display in devising new wigs is something astonishing.

"When Tom Craven last played Mrs. Crusoe he wore a most ingeniously-contrived wig. Imagine the shrieks of laughter when the savages, after tying Mrs. Crusoe to a tree, proceeded to cut a piece out of her head and eat it. How was it done? The crown was constructed to hold a small loaf.

"Equally uncanny—although I am bound to say that the audience regarded it as a good joke—was a wig I made of cork, which was so arranged that large hunks could be chopped clean out. To prevent the chopper or axe going through, I had to line the wig with a thick casing of tin.

"Arthur Roberts is, of course, content to rely for his effects on his own inimitable humour; but his inventiveness is so extraordinary that I am sure the public would welcome some of the trick wigs he produced years ago. In one of his pantomimes he wore a wig so constructed that, after he had been scalped and a restorative applied to the bald head, a fresh crop of hair would immediately begin to force its way through the scalp.

"Another wig of Mr. Roberts' devising was the one he wore in the Avenue pantomime of *Robinson Crusoe*. Roberts was the Man Friday. His wig, when first seen, was rough and wild like that of a savage; but the moment anything occurred which alarmed Friday, the hair would arrange itself into nine rows of curls, one behind the other. It was really very funny.

"One of the most extraordinary effects I ever saw was obtained from a Japanese wig I made. This wig contained in the centre of the forehead an enormous eye which, when closed, was not perceptible. Few among the audience could resist starting when the eye slowly revealed itself, the juveniles especially being greatly alarmed till the character said, with great solemnity: 'I've got my eye on you;' then they all laughed.

"The great feature of modern pantomime wigs is their lightness. Years ago, an ordinary pantomime wig would frequently exceed ten ounces in weight. Now my customers grumble if I don't keep them down to one ounce. You may perhaps remember the two wigs I made for the ugly sisters in the pantomime of *Cinderella* at Drury Lane. 'Now, Clarkson,' said the late Sir Augustus Harris, 'I want these wigs to be four feet high, and covered with flowers and ribands; and mind, they must not weigh more than two pounds each.'

"How well I remember his incredulous laugh when I said they should not weigh six ounces each. When he saw them he was as surprised as George Conquest when he handled the last giant's wig I made for him. It was a huge affair, and most ingeniously conceived. The forehead seamed and wrinkled when the giant lost his temper, the eyes opened and shut, and the eyeballs rolled, the cheeks swelled or sank, the eyebrows twitched, and the ears wagged. You would scarcely believe what a fiendish expression the absence of a mouth gave the wig and head. The wearer saw through the beard. This head cost £15.

"The wigs worn by the Two Macs are, of course, very heavy, as the tops of each have to be fitted with blocks of wood for their business. One of this class of wig I once made of iron. It clanged like an anvil when struck with a hammer. To protect the wearer the wig was lined with cork. The lightness I have spoken of greatly assists me in carrying out the ideas of my customers.

"Here is the drawing of one which had a cupboard in the scalp opening with a key. All sorts of laughable articles were produced from this receptacle, the laughter being very great when a piece of the wearer's brain was exhibited. One of the most effective wigs I ever made was a bladder which swelled to truly colossal proportions when blown out. The wearer would enter apparently the possessor of an enormous head. As the scene progressed the air would escape, the effect, as the head slowly collapsed, being quite remarkable.

"Horace Mills had a curious wig I made for him. On the application of a mixture supposed to be hair dye, the hair slowly developed patches of blue, red, white, black, yellow, and brown. People, I believe, used to go to the theatre on purpose to see that wig.

"If Charles Lauri had not been an actor he would, I am certain, have immortalised himself as an inventor. 'Whatever is this?' I remember saying when he brought me the drawing for a new wig. 'In this pantomime,' he replied, 'I have arranged for one of the characters to open my head and set fire to my brains.' There is no need to describe the means by which he purposed realising this idea. Suffice it to say that the wig proved an immense success.

TO A PAIR OF SHOON.

OH, you Saucie littyle Paire!
With yr daintie littyle Aire,
I doe admit you're most provoking Swete;
Yett, alas! I doe complaine
You are sadlye Proude and Yaine,
Just because My Ladye lets you touch hr Feete.

You turne uppe yr littyle Toes
Lyke a Prettie Mayde hr Nose,
Since My Ladye deigns to weare you—Now and
Thenne.
Yett you're Ryvvalls—Bootes and Shoes—
'Mongst ye wh My Deare may chuse,
Lyke ye Prettie Mayde may chuse 'ymongst ye
Menne.

Soe Slippers, Don't be Vaine!
& when she come againe,
Bee sure my love right modestlie ye Greete;
Ye kisse I ldo in Eache,
Pray givve her with this Speeche:
"Tredd lightlye, for his Heart's beneath the yr Feete!"

PROVIDING FOR VISITORS.

DURING the hunting season a Scotch laird was favoured with many visitors. On one occasion there assembled at his house a party more numerous than usual, and such as to excite the fears of his house-keeper for accommodation during the night. In this quandary she applied to her master.

"Dear me, laird, what am I to dae wi' a' thae folk? I wonder they hae nae mair sense than come troopin' here in dizers; there's no beds in the hoose for half of them!"

"Keep yersel' easy, my woman," said the laird. "There's plenty o' guid whisky. I'll just fill them a' fu', and they'll fin' beds for themsels."

HOW HORRIBLE!

THE guests at a Christmas party, as a compliment to the host and hostess, waxed clamorous to see the four-year-old son and heir. The young gentleman having been taken out of bed and carried into the festive arena, stared sleepily at the ladies and gentlemen, and then, fixing his eyes on the remains of the pudding, essayed to speak.

The youngster was famed for smartness, and the company was all attention.

The darling lisped: "I know where that puddin' was biled, and I know what it was biled in."

"Hush, my dear!" gasped the terrified mamma, anxious to avert the threatened disclosure.

"No, I won't hush!" exclaimed the irrepressible. "Ma tied it up in pa's old shirt, and biled it in the copper, where pa biles the lumps of gee-gees for the bow-wows in the kennel!"

ENGLAND'S GALLANT SONS.

YOUTHFUL gallantry is not yet an extinct quality of the English race, as the conduct of a schoolboy who lives in London abundantly shows. He is seven years old. A few months ago he was blessed with a sister, and a few days since he overheard that she was to be vaccinated. The boy anxiously inquired what this meant, and after many entreaties he was told that his sister's arm would have to be cut.

The idea of the mite suffering pain so worried him that he insisted on being vaccinated in her stead. He was jocularly told that such a thing could not be done unless he got away early from school, and he actually made an excuse to get free half-an-hour before the usual time, rushed home, found the doctor, and, baring his arm, asked him tremblingly:

"Please, sir, do me instead."
The doctor was naturally touched by this little offer of vicarious suffering, and postponed the operation until it could be done without the generous brother's knowledge.

THERE are three things yet to be discovered: perpetual motion, a flying machine which will fly, and a woman who does not face to the rear when getting off a tram-car.

HE (telling a hairbreadth adventure): "And in the bright moonlight we could see the dark muzzles of the wolves!"

SHE (breathlessly): "Oh, how glad you must have been that they had the muzzles on!"

"WERE you afraid I would say no?" asked she who had just said yes.

"No," said he who had been made happy; "I was afraid I'd make a fool of myself, that you'd say no, and then tell Sue Jones all about it, thus spoiling my chances with her."

Briton or Boer?

A TALE OF THE FIGHT FOR AFRICA.

BY GEORGE GRIFFITH.

Author of "THE ANGEL OF THE REVOLUTION," "OLGA ROMANOFF," "VALDAR THE OFF-BORN," etc.
ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD PIFFARD.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"REMEMBER WHERE YOU ARE, BOYS!"

THE immediate cause of the unexpected movement in the then headquarters of the Transvaal army and the rapid withdrawal of the now overwhelming numerous forces which had been poured into Wakkerstroom was the arrival of half-a-dozen mounted men, whose horses didn't seem to have another stride left in them.

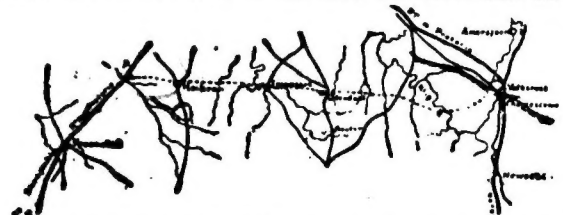
They had come at a gallop from beyond the extreme British left with the news that a new British army, led by the redoubtable and cordially-hated "Butcher Carrington," had fought its way across the Klip river in the teeth of a strenuous opposition from the Free State burghers and the garrison that had been left in Volksrust, and was advancing rapidly along the southern bank of the Vaal.

It was composed of British regulars and sailors, Rhodesian troopers, and that legion of Matabili warriors whose fame had already spread through the length and breadth of the two republics. In addition to these clouds of wild horse-men, no doubt the ever-dreaded Basutos, had been seen massed along the Free State side of the Klip river, seemingly ready to cross at a moment's notice.

No more momentous or exasperating news could possibly have been conveyed to President Kruger and his generals than this. In another couple of hours at most they must inevitably have marched through the ruins of Wakkerstroom into Natal. From there to Charlestown would have been little more than a military promenade. At Charlestown they would have seized the railway, then Newcastle would have fallen, and after that Maritzburg, from whence they could have dictated terms of peace to the British Government, as they virtually had done after the first battle of Amajuba.

If something had only delayed the coming of this man who had so unexpectedly brought the beginnings of trouble upon them in the North, all might and probably would have been well, but that something had not happened, and here he had come just in time to snatch the fruits of almost certain victory from them.

To continue the assault on Wakkerstroom would now be little short of madness, for the news must soon reach the



British Commander-in-Chief. His troops, inspired with new hope, would fight with redoubled resolution, and even an hour's delay would be fatal. The troops occupying the British centre and left would join hands with their deliverers, and the army of the Transvaal, caught on front and flank and rear, assailed by fresh and victorious troops, and flanked by unknown thousands of the fierce and revengeful Basutos, would be hemmed in among the mountains and cut to pieces in detail. An instant retreat on Volksrust was the only possible road to safety, and a pitched battle under the shadow of Amajuba Hill offered the now only remaining hope of victory.

Hardly had the orders to retreat begun to be obeyed by the reluctant and wondering Boers when the sun, which had been obscured for the greater part of the day, burst suddenly through the dissolving clouds like an omen of new hope for the army which had been so nearly defeated, and instantly the heliograph signals began to flash from the westward from point to point along the range, conveying the good tidings to the British generals.

A brief consultation resulted in the immediate issue of orders for the whole British force to advance and press upon the rear of the retreating Boers. Meanwhile, too, signals were flashed back to the left, informing General Carrington of the position of affairs, and ordering all the lighter batteries to be pushed forward so as to command the drifts of the Vaal and Klip rivers, and to the armoured train, to hold itself in readiness to advance as far as the state of the line would permit it, and, if necessary, to prevent any attack on the part of the Boers to retreat by train from Volksrust.

The position of affairs now virtually resolved itself into a race between the army of the Transvaal, and what must now be called the two sections of the British forces. If the Boer leaders could get their men back across the Klip River, and reach Volksrust before they were caught between the two converging armies, they might possibly give successful battle to both of them, for it was probable that they were still equal in numbers of both combined. But if General Carrington succeeded in getting to Volksrust first they would have no alternative save unconditional surrender or fighting their battle with an enemy on both flanks and the guns of the British mountain batteries in their rear.

The retreat, however, speedily resolved itself into a running fight. The British troops in the enthusiasm of reaction from the dogged resolution to die where they stood rather than let the enemy set foot on British soil, to the new-born hope of joining hands with their comrades from the west, and crushing that enemy in the grim em-

brace of battle, forgot all the fatigue of the long hours of fighting; wounds ceased to give pain, hunger and thirst seemed to vanish as if by magic, and all that they remembered was that they had nearly been defeated, and that men of their own blood and race had saved them from the impending disaster.

Men who a few minutes before had been longing to lie down and go to sleep through sheer weariness, now stepped out with long swinging strides as though they had just turned out of their bivouacs. Three batteries of the States



Artillery were charged and carried with a rush in the very act of limbering up to follow the retreat, and it was even a matter of some difficulty for the British officers to restrain their men from pressing imprudently close on the rear of the retreating enemy, so great are the marvels that new-born hope can accomplish.

General Carrington, the Blücher of this later Waterloo, had made a series of forced marches of some hundred and forty miles in six days, from Blauwboosch Pont, on the Bloemfontein-Johannesburg railway, where he had detrained his men, to the banks of the Klip river, at the point where it cuts through the Drakensberg range to the west of Volksrust.

He had reached the drift shortly after two on the afternoon of the day of battle. His passage had been opposed by a force of about two thousand Free State burghers, who had checked him for about half-an-hour until Major Bryan had taken his dusky warriors through the water about a mile to the westward, and thrown them in a furious charge on their right flank, at the same moment that the fifteen hundred Australians and the two companies of Natal Carbineers, who had held the position on the extreme British left, came down the slopes and took them in the rear.

These two attacks crushed them up together in such fashion that a few minutes machine-gun and artillery fire across the river from their centre broke them up into utter disorder. Then the Rhodesian troopers charged through the drift, closely followed by the Leicestershire and York and Lancaster Regiments with the bayonet, and ten minutes later they were scattering over the plain carrying the news of disaster to Volksrust and Wakkerstroom.

Not a moment was lost, for no one knew how much might be dependent just then upon rapid movement. The artillery and machine-guns were ferried across on barrel rafts, which had been brought along for the purpose, and all the waggons, save the lighter ones that carried the ammunition, were left behind. The Basuto horsemen were taken across the river and told to push north-eastward, and place themselves between Volksrust and Standerton, to cut off the Boer retreat to the north, and then General Carrington led the rest of his army straight on the Transvaal frontier-town.

Just as it debouched on to the open plain between the slopes of the mountains and Volksrust, the head of the Transvaal army was sighted in full retreat from the eastward, and the roll of continuous firing came rumbling up from their rear.

"That's all right!" said the General, with characteristic terseness of speech. "Sir Charles is coming up behind them. We've got the hills to the south and the Basutos to the north, and if they get away now it will be our fault."

That was the situation in a sentence. Orders were given with rapidity and decision, and obeyed just as rapidly and precisely. The artillery and cavalry went over the ground almost at a gallop. Troop after troop and battery after battery deployed into its appointed position, and soon the flash of the guns and the scream and bang of the bursting shells, mingling with the crash and roar of the machine-guns on front and flank and rear, told the leaders of the Transvaal army that they had lost the race and that the hour of destiny was about to strike.

What happened during the next two hours was rather a *mélée* on a gigantic scale than a set battle. There were hurricanes of shot and shell and machine-fire, followed by furious charges of horse, met by deadly volleys of rifle-fire, and checked only to give place to rushes of infantry and the terrible work of bullet and bayonet at close quarters.

Briton and Boer fought their best, each fighting for life



and country, at least, in payment of a long - deferred debt of vengeance and insult and the vindication of a too-long outraged national honour. The peasant soldiery of the Transvaal fought as it had never fought before and would never fight again. All the long hatred born of real and fancied wrongs blazed up into a fierce fury within them

As blind as a bat, as deaf as a post,
As cold as ice, as warm as toast.

Carrington, after giving his last orders, pointed with his sword to the frowning heights of Amajuba and said:

"Remember where you are, boys, and whose graves there are up yonder!"

And his words had flown like a battle-signal through the ranks, echoed from lip to lip, and the men looked up and remembered the shameful story of that day sixteen years ago, and there was not a man of them all but swore in his heart that before the next sun rose that shame should be wiped away for ever from the British arms.

Foot by foot, and yard by yard, the ring of British steel closed in round all that was left of the doomed army that had set out to conquer Africa for the Afrikaner. The way to the bridge, across the spruit, was barred by the armoured train, from the guns of which death-dealing tempests of shot and shell burst forth whenever an attempt was made to force a retreat that way. Along the banks of the spruit itself were the long, dusky lines and reddened bayonets of the Matabili Legion, and beyond, circling round between Volksrust and the open veld, were the dark, swiftly-moving forms of the Basuto horsemen, cutting off all hope of retreat to the north. West and south and east were the British regiments and the British batteries, and in the midst a vast, formless mob of men, which now could no longer be called an army.

Every now and then some of the encircling regiments would wheel back, the batteries would burst out in smoke and flame, and a whistling, screaming stream of shot and shell would tear its way through the crowded masses of men and horses, leaving long, wide gaps and lanes behind it strewn with struggling forms and others who would never struggle again.

Then, before the gaps and lanes could close, the British Horse charged in with swinging sabre and swift-thrusting lance, breaking the great mass up like wedges of steel driven in to the heart of some great prostrate tree, until at length it became disintegrated into smaller masses, each fighting for its own hand with the grim valour of a despair which knew that all was lost and yet refused to yield.

In the centre of the largest of these groups rose conspicuously the burly form of the old President, seated on a big, brown horse and surrounded by a devoted band of his comrades and kinsmen, determined, like him, to die in the death-hour of their nation and their hopes. Saving for the different conditions of warfare, it was the scene of Flodden



Field over again, and, as the chivalry and devotion of Scotland had closed round their King four hundred years before, so now the peasant soldiers of the Transvaal closed round their stout old chief, and there was not a man of them who would dream of ceasing fire until his last cartridge had been shot away, or he had heard from the President's lips the words of surrender that he knew he would never speak.

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PREACHER: "How do you like your new mamma, Johnnie?"
Johnnie: "Oh, purty good. I et a jar of plums yister-day, and she blamed it on to the servant."

CHILDREN SOMETIMES HAVE ODD IDEAS OF KINDNESS.—Mamma: "How cruel, Eleanor, to hurt the poor little worm."

Eleanor: "But he looked so lonely, mamma, an' I just cut him in two so's he'd have company, an' the two of him wiggled off together jus' as happy as possible."

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PLAYING "MAKE-BELIEVE."

COME sit here awhile, where the firelight is glowing with tremor and start;
'Twas only for this that I lingered till after the guests should depart.
Ah, me, how the breath of your lilies is laden with love and with truth!
They bring up again, for a moment, the tenderest dreams of one's youth.
Methinks 'twould be sweet to live over—or love over—even in play,
As children might do, knowing nothing, but just "making believe," as they say.
Of course, 'twould be only a jesting, a pastime, to you and to me,
But just for to-night let us try it and see if such things there could be.
And Time shall roll back (let's pretend it), for only ourselves, we will say,
So instead of the years we have wasted, we'll think it was only a day!
And we will be friends again—lovers, perhaps, as of old, if you will,
And play that we never had quarrelled, but really did care, you know, still.
'Tis just for to-night, child, this only, and midnight shall limit our play,
And then, why, then Time can move onward, and I shall be going away.
Now, how to begin! You must ask me to read some old legend and sweet,
And you shall sit here in the shadows, with me kneeling low at your feet;
While up in its crimson and glory the firelight flickers and faints,
And over your eyes, as you listen, the white lids droop, like a saint's;
And how the soft rose-flush is mounting and drifting in just the old way!
(But you must not blush at my words, dear; remember, we're only in play!)
And now, I believe, 'tis your hand, sweet, that lies on my rough, curling hair,
As snow, falling soft in the winter, caresses the dark leaves there.
But harken! The midnight is striking! Our play-time is over you see;
(Yet never a day of the old love was precious as this one to me).

And now you are free! Do you hear me? Quite free, as you had been before,
And we are "grown-up folks" again, child, and not "making believe" any more;
So I will just pray, as I leave you, that God will let nothing befall,
Because, oh, my darling, I love you! 'Twas never a child's play at all!
And I had meant never to tell you, because of the past that was dead;
But somehow, perhaps 'twas the lilies, and somehow, the words would be said.
So try and forgive me: good-night now, and yet—and yet—God! do I dream?
Are the tears in your soft eyes welling, or is it the fire's subtle gleam?
Ah, no! for a sob is my answer, I hold you for ever and fast—
For I know that the play of the children meant only a real love at last.

THE MOST RAPID SPEAKER.

THE most rapid orator in the world, and the torment of the swiftest shorthand-writers, is the Italian Deputy and ex-Minister, Barnardino Grimaldi.
The tongue of this eloquent politician possesses "the capacity of gurgling forth a torrent of 180 to 200 words in a minute." The last subject of his Parliamentary oratory was the Italian railway legislation, upon which he had delivered forty-two long speeches, to the mingled admiration and horror of his audience.
"What a mercy," exclaimed one, "that Grimaldi was not born a girl!"
"Yes," replied the other; "fancy such a speaker growing up to be somebody's mother-in-law!"

WILLIE (at the close of Christmas Day): "Ma, didn't you say that Santa Claus only brought presents to good boys?"
Mother: "Yes, dear."
Willie: "Well, if Santa Claus thinks all of the fellers he brought presents for at Christmas are good boys, he must be easily fooled."

A SCHOOL inspector, having a few minutes to spare after examining the school, put a few questions to the lower form boys on the common objects of the school-room.
"What is the use of that map?" he asked, pointing to one stretched across a corner of the room: and half-a-dozen shrill voices answered:
"Please, sir, it's to hide teacher's bicycle."

GAMES FOR XMAS PARTIES,

ALTHOUGH this competition has been extremely successful so far as the number of attempts is concerned, the quality of the contributions was scarcely brilliant. Most of the games sent in were altogether too well known, while a large number were simply popular games elaborated. The £5 has been awarded to Mr. W. G. Mole, 28, Pinhoe Road, Exeter, for "Japan Fan Racing." The other competitors whose contributions appear below have been paid at the rate of £2 2s. a column for their matter.

"A SPIDER-WEB PARTY."

ONE of the members of the party must get a reel of thick white or red silk, and, going from room to room, upstairs and down, wind the silk round any obstacles met on the way, the more intricate the windings the more fun and delay. At the end of the windings a prize must be attached, and the lucky one who first traces the windings correctly, gets the prize. The other members of the company remain, in the meantime, all in one room, until the spider (generally the hostess) finishes her web. Then they all set out to unravel the web, the spider following to see the correct solution of the puzzle.

"JAPAN FAN RACING."

FURNISH some half-dozen of your company with a Japanese fan each.
Have ready as many pieces of paper, one to be apportioned to each player, and each piece to be about the size of the palm of your hand and of a different colour, so that each player may know his own.
Then settle on a starting-place and a winning-post, one being at one end of a large room and the other at the other; lay one piece of paper on the carpet before each player, and at a "One, two, three, and away!" let each run at his paper, striving who can fan it to the winning-post first.
Amusement will lie in the liability of the papers to get so involved that Pink's fanning, say, will help Blue's paper more than his own.
Fanning must be the only mode of progress, never the hand.

THE "GRAMPUS" GAME.

A DINING-TABLE, an ordinary glass marble, and a piece of chalk are required for this game. The players must be evenly divided, and, if possible, it is better to have the same number of ladies and gentlemen on each side.
A line is drawn down the middle of the table, and the players kneel round, each "side" taking one half of the table.
The captain then starts the game by blowing the marble down his side of the table, from the end, after which the object is to blow the marble off their opponent's side of the chalk line. When the marble is blown off the table, it counts as a goal to the other side, and also if the marble touches one of the players. A goal cannot be scored from a "kick-off;" the marble must be turned by some of the other players before it leaves the table. Ten goals is "game."
When the marble is going quickly it can be stopped by blowing in little puffs, instead of blowing steadily. A great deal of science can be put into the game, as "passing" is necessary.

A PENNY OR A KISS.

THE first thing that is done is to put all the young ladies out of the room and bring all the gentlemen in; then tie a piece of mistletoe in the centre of the room to the ceiling or gas-pendant; then you get a penny and place it on the back of some gentleman, making him stand exactly under the mistletoe. The next thing you do is to call in one of the young ladies, lead her to the centre of the room, under the mistletoe, and opposite the young man, get a handkerchief and tie her hands in front; then the gentleman asks her to lift the penny off his back.
Of course, she has to put her hands and arms over his head to reach the penny, and then he lifts up his head—it being in between her arms—and kisses her. Then, when she has been kissed, another girl is called in, until the same operation has been performed on them all. Of course, you can change the gentleman under the mistletoe, and not give the same one the whole of the good things.
Needless to say, this game creates great fun and laughter. If any girl sees through the game and does not get kissed, she wins the penny.

"MUMMIES."

LET two or three of the gentlemen be swathed in sheets until perfectly shapeless, leaving only one eye exposed, and labelled: "Please do not touch." They may be seated or standing.
The showman then invites the rest of the guests into the room, and spins a yarn about obtaining the mummies, but being under a difficulty as to their identity, therefore, he offers three prizes (real ones) to those who can give the correct names of them.

"ACTING TITLES."

A FEW of the company are chosen, or volunteer, to be the actors. They retire, and proceed to select the title of a book, returning to the room to act the one chosen, in dumb show, mystifying the audience as much as possible, of course.
After the actors have retired, the audience must, in three guesses, name the title. If successful a fresh contingent retires, and the game continues.
For instance, "All Sorts and Conditions of Men" is easily acted, using hats and caps, etc., found in the hall, to emphasise the distinctions. "Work" is also illustrated by each one imitating some trade.
"Little Women and Good Wives," by a group of children and their mothers. "We Two" needs no description, though it may be guessed as "My Cousin and I."
"The Manchester Man," should there be one who can claim the title, will puzzle the company by just walking in and out again.
"Valdar the Oft-Born" may be depicted by a gentleman carrying a saucepan lid and flourishing an umbrella in an attitude similar to that of the figure on the cover of the book.
A number of persons chirping would give an excellent clue to "When the Birds begin to Sing."
The titles of songs and periodicals will also suggest endless scenes to add to the pleasures of the company.

BAULKED AGAIN.—Long-haired Visitor (entering timidly): "I have here a little poem written on snow, and—"
Editor (interrupting hastily): "Written on snow! We can't use anything that isn't written on paper. Sorry. Turn the knob to the right. That's it. Good-morning!"

"DORA," said her father, "I told you a month ago that you must have nothing more to do with young Doctor Seedeigh, because of his poverty."
"Yes, pa."
"Well, you may encourage his attentions now, and win him if you can. Since influenza broke out he has become a millionaire."

WIFE: "Be sure to advertise for Fido in the morning newspapers."
Next day the wife read in the morning newspapers:
"Ten Shillings Reward.—Lost, a mangy lap-dog, with one eye and no tail. Too fat to walk. Answers to the name of Fido. Smells like a monkey-house. If returned stuffed, thirty shillings reward."

"My gracious, Johnny! Why are you pounding Willie Stuffington on the stomach in that manner?" asked the good lady who was presiding over one of the tables at the church supper.
"Because he has eaten all he can hold without havin' it shook down, an' he wants another piece of cake," replied Johnny Squanch. "He's going to do the same thing for me when I get full."

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Briton or Boer?

A TALE OF THE FIGHT FOR AFRICA.

BY GEORGE GRIFFITH.

Author of "THE ANGEL OF THE REVOLUTION," "OLGA ROMANOFF," "VALDAR THE OFF-BORN," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD PIFFARD.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"REMEMBER WHERE YOU ARE, BOYS!"

THE immediate cause of the unexpected movement in the then headquarters of the Transvaal army and the rapid withdrawal of the now overwhelmingly numerous forces which had been poured into Wakkerstroom was the arrival of half-a-dozen mounted men, whose horses didn't seem to have another stride left in them.

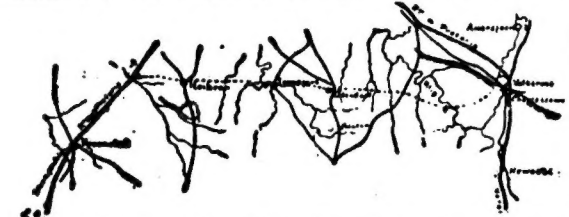
They had come at a gallop from beyond the extreme British left with the news that a new British army, led by the redoubtable and cordially-hated "Butcher Carrington," had fought its way across the Klip river in the teeth of a strenuous opposition from the Free State burghers and the garrison that had been left in Volksrust, and was advancing rapidly along the southern bank of the Vaal.

It was composed of British regulars and sailors, Rhodesian troopers, and that legion of Matabili warriors whose fame had already spread through the length and breadth of the two republics. In addition to these clouds of wild horse-men, no doubt the ever-dreaded Basutos, had been seen massed along the Free State side of the Klip river, seemingly ready to cross at a moment's notice.

No more momentous or exasperating news could possibly have been conveyed to President Kruger and his generals than this. In another couple of hours at most they must inevitably have marched through the ruins of Wakkerstroom into Natal. From there to Charlestown would have been little more than a military promenade. At Charlestown they would have seized the railway, then Newcastle would have fallen, and after that Maritzburg, from whence they could have dictated terms of peace to the British Government, as they virtually had done after the first battle of Amajuba.

If something had only delayed the coming of this man who had so unexpectedly brought the beginnings of trouble upon them in the North, all might and probably would have been well, but that something had not happened, and here he had come just in time to snatch the fruits of almost certain victory from them.

To continue the assault on Wakkerstroom would now be little short of madness, for the news must soon reach the



British Commander-in-Chief. His troops, inspired with new hope, would fight with redoubled resolution, and even an hour's delay would be fatal. The troops occupying the British centre and left would join hands with their deliverers, and the army of the Transvaal, caught on front and flank and rear, assailed by fresh and victorious troops, and flanked by unknown thousands of the fierce and revengeful Basutos, would be hemmed in among the mountains and cut to pieces in detail. An instant retreat on Volksrust was the only possible road to safety, and a pitched battle under the shadow of Amajuba Hill offered the now only remaining hope of victory.

Hardly had the orders to retreat begun to be obeyed by the reluctant and wondering Boers when the sun, which had been obscured for the greater part of the day, burst suddenly through the dissolving clouds like an omen of new hope for the army which had been so nearly defeated, and instantly the heliograph signals began to flash from the westward from point to point along the range, conveying the good tidings to the British generals.

A brief consultation resulted in the immediate issue of orders for the whole British force to advance and press upon the rear of the retreating Boers. Meanwhile, too, signals were flashed back to the left, informing General Carrington of the position of affairs, and ordering all the lighter batteries to be pushed forward so as to command the drifts of the Vaal and Klip rivers, and to the armoured train, to hold itself in readiness to advance as far as the state of the line would permit it, and, if necessary, to prevent any attack on the part of the Boers to retreat by train from Volksrust.

The position of affairs now virtually resolved itself into a race between the army of the Transvaal, and what must now be called the two sections of the British forces. If the Boer leaders could get their men back across the Klip River, and reach Volksrust before they were caught between the two converging armies, they might possibly give successful battle to both of them, for it was probable that they were still equal in numbers of both combined. But if General Carrington succeeded in getting to Volksrust first they would have no alternative save unconditional surrender or fighting their battle with an enemy on both flanks and the guns of the British mountain batteries in their rear.

The retreat, however, speedily resolved itself into a running fight. The British troops in the enthusiasm of re-action from the dogged resolution to die where they stood rather than let the enemy set foot on British soil, to the new-born hope of joining hands with their comrades from the west, and crushing that enemy in the grim em-

brace of battle, forgot all the fatigue of the long hours of fighting; wounds ceased to give pain, hunger and thirst seemed to vanish as if by magic, and all that they remembered was that they had nearly been defeated, and that men of their own blood and race had saved them from the impending disaster.

Men who a few minutes before had been longing to lie down and go to sleep through sheer weariness, now stepped out with long swinging strides as though they had just turned out of their bivouacs. Three batteries of the States



Artillery were charged and carried with a rush in the very act of limbering up to follow the retreat, and it was even a matter of some difficulty for the British officers to restrain their men from pressing imprudently close on the rear of the retiring enemy, so great are the marvels that new-born hope can accomplish.

General Carrington, the Blücher of this later Waterloo, had made a series of forced marches of some hundred and forty miles in six days, from Blauwboosch Pont, on the Bloemfontein-Johannesburg railway, where he had detrained his men, to the banks of the Klip river, at the point where it cuts through the Drakensberg range to the west of Volksrust.

He had reached the drift shortly after two on the afternoon of the day of battle. His passage had been opposed by a force of about two thousand Free State burghers, who had checked him for about half-an-hour until Major Bryan had taken his dusky warriors through the water about a mile to the westward, and thrown them in a furious charge on their right flank, at the same moment that the fifteen hundred Australians and the two companies of Natal Carbineers, who had held the position on the extreme British left, came down the slopes and took them in the rear.

These two attacks crushed them up together in such fashion that a few minutes machine-gun and artillery fire across the river on their centre broke them up into utter disorder. Then the Rhodesian troopers charged through the drift, closely followed by the Leicestershire and York and Lancaster Regiments with the bayonet, and ten minutes later they were scattering over the plain carrying the news of disaster to Volksrust and Wakkerstroom.

Not a moment was lost, for no one knew how much might be dependent just then upon rapid movement. The artillery and machine-guns were ferried across on barrel rafts, which had been brought along for the purpose, and all the waggons, save the lighter ones that carried the ammunition, were left behind. The Basuto horsemen were taken across the river and told to push north-eastward, and place themselves between Volksrust and Standerton, to cut off the Boer retreat to the north, and then General Carrington led the rest of his army straight on the Transvaal frontier-town.

Just as it debouched on to the open plain between the slopes of the mountains and Volksrust, the head of the Transvaal army was sighted in full retreat from the eastward, and the roll of continuous firing came rumbling up from their rear.

"That's all right!" said the General, with characteristic terseness of speech. "Sir Charles is coming up behind them. We've got the hills to the south and the Basutos to the north, and if they get away now it will be our fault."

That was the situation in a sentence. Orders were given with rapidity and decision, and obeyed just as rapidly and precisely. The artillery and cavalry went over the ground almost at a gallop. Troop after troop and battery after battery deployed into its appointed position, and soon the flash of the guns and the scream and bang of the bursting shells, mingling with the crash and roar of the machine-guns on front and flank and rear, told the leaders of the Transvaal army that they had lost the race and that the hour of destiny was about to strike.

What happened during the next two hours was rather a *mélée* on a gigantic scale than a set battle. There were hurricanes of shot and shell and machine-fire, followed by furious charges of horse, met by deadly volleys of rifle-fire, and checked only to give place to rushes of infantry and the terrible work of bullet and bayonet at close quarters.

Briton and Boer fought their best, each fighting for life



and country, and one side, at least, in payment of a long - deferred debt of vengeance and insult and the vindication of a too-long outraged national honour. The peasant soldiery of the Transvaal fought as it had never fought before and would never fight again. All the long hatred born of real and fancied wrongs blazed up into a fierce fury within them

As blind as a bat, as deaf as a post,
As cold as ice, as warm as toast.

Carrington, after giving his last orders, pointed with his sword to the frowning heights of Amajuba and said:

"Remember where you are, boys, and whose graves there are up yonder!"

And his words had flown like a battle-signal through the ranks, echoed from lip to lip, and the men looked up and remembered the shameful story of that day sixteen years ago, and there was not a man of them all but swore in his heart that before the next sun rose that shame should be wiped away for ever from the British arms.

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And you shall sit here in the shadows, with me kneeling low at your feet;
While up in its crimson and glory the firelight flickers and faints,
And over your eyes, as you listen, the white lids droop, like a saint's;
And how the soft rose-flush is mounting and drifting in just the old way!
(But you must not blush at my words, dear; remember, we're only in play!)
And now, I believe, 'tis your hand, sweet, that lies on my rough, curling hair.
As snow, falling soft in the winter, caresses the dark leaves there.
But harken! The midnight is striking! Our play-time is over you see;
(Yet never a day of the old love was precious as this one to me).

And now you are free! Do you hear me? Quite free, as you had been before.
And we are "grown-up folks" again, child, and not "making believe" any more;
So I will just pray, as I leave you, that God will let nothing befall,
Because, oh, my darling, I love you! 'Twas never a child's play at all!
And I had meant never to tell you, because of the past that was dead;
But somehow, perhaps 'twas the lilies, and somehow, the words would be said.
So try and forgive me: good-night now, and yet—and yet—God! do I dream?
Are the tears in your soft eyes welling, or is it the fire's subtle gleam?
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Willie: "Well, if Santa Claus thinks all of the fellers he brought presents for at Christmas are good boys, he must be easily fooled."

A SCHOOL inspector, having a few minutes to spare after examining the school, put a few questions to the lower form boys on the common objects of the school-room.
"What is the use of that map?" he asked, pointing to one stretched across a corner of the room: and half-a-dozen shrill voices answered:
"Please, sir, it's to hide teacher's bicycle."

GAMES FOR XMAS PARTIES.

ALTHOUGH this competition has been extremely successful so far as the number of attempts is concerned, the quality of the contributions was scarcely brilliant. Most of the games sent in were altogether too well known, while a large number were simply popular games elaborated. The £5 has been awarded to Mr. W. G. Mole, 28, Pinhoe Road, Exeter, for "Japan Fan Racing." The other competitors whose contributions appear below have been paid at the rate of £2 2s. a column for their matter.

"A SPIDER-WEB PARTY."

ONE of the members of the party must get a reel of thick white or red silk, and, going from room to room, upstairs and down, wind the silk round any obstacles met on the way, the more intricate the windings the more fun and delay. At the end of the windings a prize must be attached, and the lucky one who first traces the windings correctly, gets the prize. The other members of the company remain, in the meantime, all in one room, until the spider (generally the hostess) finishes her web. Then they all set out to unravel the web, the spider following to see the correct solution of the puzzle.

"JAPAN FAN RACING."

FURNISH some half-dozen of your company with a Japanese fan each.
Have ready as many pieces of paper, one to be apportioned to each player, and each piece to be about the size of the palm of your hand and of a different colour, so that each player may know his own.
Then settle on a starting-place and a winning-post, one being at one end of a large room and the other at the other; lay one piece of paper on the carpet before each player, and at a "One, two, three, and away!" let each run at his paper, striving who can fan it to the winning-post first.
Amusement will lie in the liability of the papers to get so involved that Pink's fanning, say, will help Blue's paper more than his own.
Fanning must be the only mode of progress, never the hand.

THE "GRAMPUS" GAME.

A DINING-TABLE, an ordinary glass marble, and a piece of chalk are required for this game. The players must be evenly divided, and, if possible, it is better to have the same number of ladies and gentlemen on each side.
A line is drawn down the middle of the table, and the players kneel round, each "side" taking one half of the table.
The captain then starts the game by blowing the marble down his side of the table, from the end, after which the object is to blow the marble off their opponent's side of the chalk line. When the marble is blown off the table, it counts as a goal to the other side, and also if the marble touches one of the players. A goal cannot be scored from a "kick-off;" the marble must be turned by some of the other players before it leaves the table. Ten goals is "game."
When the marble is going quickly it can be stopped by blowing in little puffs, instead of blowing steadily. A great deal of science can be put into the game, as "passing" is necessary.

A PENNY OR A KISS.

THE first thing that is done is to put all the young ladies out of the room and bring all the gentlemen in; then tie a piece of mistletoe in the centre of the room to the ceiling or gas-pendant; then you get a penny and place it on the back of some gentleman, making him stand exactly under the mistletoe. The next thing you do is to call in one of the young ladies, lead her to the centre of the room, under the mistletoe, and opposite the young man, get a handkerchief and tie her hands in front; then the gentleman asks her to lift the penny off his back.
Of course, she has to put her hands and arms over his head to reach the penny, and then he lifts up his head—it being in between her arms—and kisses her. Then, when she has been kissed, another girl is called in, until the same operation has been performed on them all. Of course, you can change the gentleman under the mistletoe, and not give the same one the whole of the good things.
Needless to say, this game creates great fun and laughter. If any girl sees through the game and does not get kissed, she wins the penny.

"MUMMIES."

LET two or three of the gentlemen be swathed in sheets until perfectly shapeless, leaving only one eye exposed, and labelled: "Please do not touch." They may be seated or standing.
The showman then invites the rest of the guests into the room, and spins a yarn about obtaining the mummies, but being under a difficulty as to their identity, therefore, he offers three prizes (real ones) to those who can give the correct names of them.

"ACTING TITLES."

A FEW of the company are chosen, or volunteer, to be the actors. They retire, and proceed to select the title of a book, returning to the room to act the one chosen, in dumb show, mystifying the audience as much as possible, of course.
After the actors have retired, the audience must, in three guesses, name the title. If successful a fresh contingent retires, and the game continues.
For instance, "All Sorts and Conditions of Men" is easily acted, using hats and caps, etc., found in the hall, to emphasise the distinctions. "Work" is also illustrated by each one imitating some trade.
"Little Women and Good Wives," by a group of children and their mothers. "We Two" needs no description, though it may be guessed as "My Cousin and I."
"The Manchester Man," should there be one who can claim the title, will puzzle the company by just walking in and out again.
"Valdar the Oft-Born" may be depicted by a gentleman carrying a saucepan lid and flourishing an umbrella in an attitude similar to that of the figure on the cover of the book.
A number of persons chirping would give an excellent clue to "When the Birds begin to Sing."
The titles of songs and periodicals will also suggest endless scenes to add to the pleasures of the company.

BAULKED AGAIN.—Long-haired Visitor (entering timidly): "I have here a little poem written on snow, and—"

Editor (interrupting hastily): "Written on snow! We can't use anything that isn't written on paper. Sorry. Turn the knob to the right. That's it. Good-morning!"

"DORA," said her father, "I told you a month ago that you must have nothing more to do with young Doctor Seedeigh, because of his poverty."
"Yes, pa."
"Well, you may encourage his attentions now, and win him if you can. Since influenza broke out he has become a millionaire."

WIFE: "Be sure to advertise for Fido in the morning newspapers."
Next day the wife read in the morning newspapers: "Ten Shillings Reward.—Lost, a mangy lap-dog, with one eye and no tail. Too fat to walk. Answers to the name of Fido. Smells like a monkey-house. If returned stuffed, thirty shillings reward."

"My gracious, Johnny! Why are you pounding Willie Stuffington on the stomach in that manner?" asked the good lady who was presiding over one of the tables at the church supper.
"Because he has eaten all he can hold without havin' it shook down, an' he wants another piece of cake," replied Johnny Squanch. "He's going to do the same thing for me when I get full."

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For articles suitable for publication in P.W. of any length, and for short stories of not more than 2,500 words, we pay at the rate of £2. 2s. a column, which is a higher price than is paid by any other paper of the kind in the world. As an additional inducement to authors to give us the refusal of their best work, we offer a bonus of £10, which will be paid to the author of the contribution considered to be the best that appears in the numbers of P.W. dated respectively December 5, 12, 19, and 26. This offer will be repeated from month to month. A really interesting article of 500 words, or half a column, for instance, may thus bring to the writer the sum of . . .

£11 1s. 0d.

FICTION.

THE YOUNG LADY MISSIONER.

THERE she goes, with schemes prolific for the heathen-
ialed Pacific,
All her soul with pity burning for those far-off coral
shores;
She would have her friends endow a ladies' school in
Chicahaua,
And establish kindergartens through the indolent Azores.
Now she pleads with you to sign a paper in behalf of
China,
To correct an ancient evil by a prize for larger feet;
And her lovely eyes are streaming, while she speaks of
heathen women
With their shocking scant apparel and the vulgar food
they eat.
Not a man has heart to snub her, though she turns the
talk to blubber,
Oily natives of Kamschatka and the podgy Eskimos,
Or, at hinted change of topic, takes you flying o'er the
tropics
To the swarthy son of Africa with a bangle through his
nose.
Oh, she looks and speaks so sweetly that she wins your
heart completely,
And her strings of dry statistics chain you like a
silk mesh;
You give most profound attention to each sev'ral
heathen mention,
For her face is like a rose-leaf, and your heart is only
flesh.
By-and-bye, with fingers taper, she presents a folded
paper,
And you spread it out before you with a sigh that
sweeps the floor;
Here are victims without number, from a poet to a
plumber,
And you never saw such figures on a begging-sheet
before.
Up you glance with indecision—but you see a pleading
vision,
Dewy lips beset with dimples, eyes like sweet unuttered
prayers.
And with all your spirit burning you set down a whole
week's earning,
To assist some lucky heathen up the shiny golden stairs.

The Dangers of City Life.—"So you were a
pioneer in the early days of the East India Company?"
"I was," answered the man with the grey beard.
"You lived among the hostile Indians?"

"Yes."
"Lived with a rifle in your hands, and in hourly
expectation of being the mark for a hidden enemy's
bullet?"

"It was something like that."
"Do you know I often think that a life like that must
be terrible. I should think the mere strain on the
nerves would kill a man in a short time—holding your
life in your hand all the time, always conscious that a
moment's relaxation of vigilance may mean death."

"Oh, I don't know," replied the grey-beard. "When
I came back from the East I was sixty years old, and
did not have a grey hair. The very day I landed in
London I went to Birmingham, and started to walk
across a street. Half-way over I heard the most awful
clanging and shrieking I ever heard, and somebody
gave me a push that sent me on the kerbstone. Then
I looked round. I saw I'd come within an ace of being
run over by a steam tram. Never had so narrow an
escape from the hill tribes."

"I went into a restaurant close by to get a drink and
settle my nerves. While I was standing at the bar a
couple of fellows got into an argument, and one of
them threw a heavy beer-jug. Didn't hit the other
fellow, but it came within a sixteenth of an inch of my
right temple."

"I started to walk to the town hall, and the first
crossing I came to a policeman grabbed me by the
shoulder and jerked me across so quickly it made my
head swim. I looked to see what was the matter, for
there were no tram-cars in that street, and I saw I had
just escaped from being run down by a hansom hurrying
to catch a train."

"A little further somebody yelled: 'Look out,' at me,
and when I jumped, a chimney-pot fell and struck where
I had been standing."

"I got to my hotel, and was making for the door,
when somebody seized me and asked me if I wanted to
be killed. They were hoisting a safe into a second-storey
window over where I'd been trying to go, and I hadn't
more than got out of the way before a rope broke and
it dropped."

"I went to bed, and about midnight I was called by
a bell ringing over my head, and found the place was
on fire, and I had to slide down a rope to escape. Being
a sound sleeper, they had hard work to wake me, and
I had barely touched the ground when the roof fell in."

"When I looked in the glass I saw the first streaks
of grey that had ever shown themselves in my hair. Oh,
there are dangers in civilised life as well as out in the
wide, wide world."

A Hard Frost.—The other evening, as a patient
policeman was pacing his beat in Howard Street, a
young man passed him and ran up a flight of stone
steps and rang the bell. The officer heard the door
open, a young lady's voice sing out, and he said to
himself: "Tis love's young dream."

He was just moving on, when another young man
approached, looked up at the house, and in a sheepish
way asked the officer if he had seen any one go in. He
was informed of what had occurred a moment before, and
he gasped: "It was that sneaking chap from Brixton."

He walked on, and the officer walked on, but ten
minutes later the young man climbed the stone steps
with a pail of water in his hand and emptied its
contents over every stone. He was sitting on the kerb-
stone opposite as the officer came back, meaning to stay
there until his plan unfolded or until he froze to death.
He didn't freeze.

In about ten minutes the door opposite opened, and
two voices were heard for a moment, and then the
young man from Brixton came down the steps on his
ear, his elbow, his shoulder-blade, his heel—on almost
every other part of the human make-up. He struck the
pavement, shot across it to the gutter, and came to a
standstill with his head in the snow.

There was a peal of laughter from the house as the
door shut, and the watcher on the kerbstone chuckled
and remarked: "That heartless laugh was not uttered
by a woman who loves!"

Five minutes later he carefully crawled up the icy
steps, and the good policeman heard him cordially
greeted, and mused: "Well, if there ain't more'n seven-
teen different ways of finding out if a girl loves you!"

Stood by Her Rights.—The woman lawyer
slammed a pile of briefs down before the Judge and
said:

"I move to discharge this prisoner on the grounds that
the prosecution have not proved their case and that the
evidence is irrelevant and immaterial."

"Motion granted," said the Judge.

"No more dastardly outrage was ever perpetrated,"
began the lawyer, "than the incarceration of this, my
innocent client. He was engaged in the pursuit of his
daily vocation, when the strong arm of the law descended
upon him. He—"

"Madam," said the Judge, "have I not already told
you that your motion was granted? The prisoner is
discharged."

"He was a man without guile," continued the fair
counselor. "He supported his family as best he could.
He was in the midst of his family circle when a minion
of the law entered and demanded his immediate incar-
ceration."

"I have already decided in your favour, madam, as I
have told you twice," drawled the Judge. "What more
do you want?"

"What more do I want, indeed?" cried the woman
lawyer, her face flushing to a crimson hue. "Why, I
want to argue this case. I stand upon my constitutional
right as a woman to have the last word, and I mean to
have it."

And she did.

"I know a fellow who could tame a tiger with a
glance of his eye."

"What became of him?"

"He's dead. He tried it on a bicycle scorchers."

REFRESHING REMARKS.—Caller: "Gracious, man,
what are you burning these rank weeds here in your
room for?"

Husband (sadly): "I'm trying to break myself in for
the cigars my wife will give me at Christmas."

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.—Bliffers (reading):
"Science now recognises a condition called 'intoxica-
tion by radiation.' Many cases of drunkenness are
cited in which the victim had touched nothing alcoholic,
but had simply been in the company of drinkers."

Whiffers: "Cut that out. I want to show it to my
wife."

ARE YOU A BAD CHARACTER?

TO amuse and at the same time to interest our readers
we have retained the services of the most expert
graphologist of the present day, and even those
who do not believe in the art will soon find them-
selves convinced if they care to send along a specimen
of their handwriting upon an unruled sheet of paper with
their usual signature and full address. From this their
characters will be told. These characters will not
necessarily be flattering. They will be bare statements of
the truth. In each case six stamps and a stamped and
addressed envelope must be inclosed. All letters should
be marked "GRAPHOLOGIST," and forwarded to
"PEARSON'S WEEKLY," BUILDING, Henrietta Street,
LONDON, W.C.

As plain as a pike-staff, as rough as a bear,
As light as a drum, as free as the air.

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS.

In the old English pantomimes the harlequin played
a serious as well as a merely comic part. The columbine
(originally his daughter) was a village maiden, whose
lover was pursued by the stage policeman.

ONE English firm alone is responsible for the annual
issue of 15,000,000 Christmas and New Year's cards.
As much as £200 has been paid for a single design for a
card, and often £1,000 is expended on one ere it reaches
the public. The writers of verse do well too, having
their little bills of £20 and upwards settled for their
contributions of seasonable poetry.

THE Scotch Presbyterian Church, and many sects of
Dissenters, have no regard for Christmas Day as a
religious festival. Many of them dispute the fact of
the twenty-fifth of December being the Day of Nativity,
maintaining amongst other reasons that at this time of
the year it is the height of the rainy season, a time when
the shepherds could hardly expect to be "watching
their flocks by night."

In England the practise of singing Christmas carols
was widely spread as early as the 9th century. Unfor-
tunately many of the traditional carols are not extant
in early manuscript copies, and were greatly corrupted
when they found their way into print. The first printed
collection of carols came from the press of Wynken de
Worde, in 1551, and a unique fragment is still preserved
containing the famous "Boar's Head" carol, which is
still sung at Queen's College, Oxford, on Christmas Day.

NATURE makes a wonderful provision for the
propagation of the mistletoe. The berries of the plant
are much sought after by the missel-thrush, a bird
familiar to all country people. As the bird eats the
berries it gets the sticky seeds entangled in its feet and
bill, and flying away to another tree, it gets rid of them
by rubbing them off sideways on the branches. It often
happens to be a favourable spot for the seed to sprout in.
Once planted the berry quickly proceeds to make good
its advantage.

ACCORDING to the manager of a leading parcels
delivery company, the recipients of some of the most
costly Christmas boxes are the parish officials of the higher
grade—those gentlemen who have the spending of the
ratepayers' money. During one festive season the vestry
clerk of his district received no fewer than fifty-seven
turkeys, sixteen hams, three legs of mutton, forty-four
boxes of cigars, eleven cases of wines and spirits, and
thirteen miscellaneous consignments of game—such as
pheasants, partridges, and hares.

In Spain a *nacimiento* is set up in most of the
respectable houses at Christmas time. This consists of
a rude imitation of rocks, with baby houses and clay
figures, representing the Nativity. The shepherds, the
ox, the ass, all kneeling to the Holy Infant, with Joseph
and Mary in a ruined stable. The evenings are spent
in merriment, dancing, reciting, and singing carols to
the sound of the zombomba, a musical instrument
formed by stretching a piece of parchment slightly
covered with wax over the mouth of an earthen jar,
with a slender reed fixed in the centre, from which a
sound is produced similar to that from a tambourine.

THE Christmas candles, which in some remote parts
of the country are still burned from the early dawn to
the close of Christmas Day, lest some evil should befall
the house during the ensuing year, are a survival of the
monster Yule candle, which in former times shed its
light upon the festive board at this season. It was a
sign of the Light that came into the world, as prophesied
by John the Baptist. The lighting of the tiny coloured
candles on the Christmas tree has the same meaning.
It was the presentation of these candles by the tallow-
chandlers to their regular customers at Christmas time
that made other tradesmen follow suit with a Christmas-
box.

CHRISTMAS DAY in the workhouse is not such a
dismal affair after all. Many of these institutions give
the inmates a liberal allowance of beer and tobacco in
addition to a generous diet, and the evening is spent
with a feast of harmony. Rather a funny incident
occurred at a provincial workhouse last Christmas. A
concert was being given, and during its progress an
unfortunate inmate volunteered a song, and after he had
struggled through some fifty verses the chairman
ventured to inquire when the warbler was expected to
cease. The maundering minstrel answered cheerily:
"Oh, there's only three hundred and fifty verses
altogether!" It was unanimously agreed that he
should reserve his vocal powers, and finish his little
ballad at some future time.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the premium in respect of
PEARSON'S WEEKLY £1,000 RAILWAY INSURANCE, and also of
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MUSTN'T TELL.

I COULD describe how fair she was;
Her lips' soft swelling
Had made me ask for just one kiss—
But that is telling.
I could say her eyes said yes,
My fears dispelling;
Yet how her lips remained demure—
But that is telling.
I could say how she turned her head,
Faintly rebelling;
And how I won the kiss at last—
But that is telling.
I could say how I closed her lips,
Their anger quelling.
Kissing is good—the only harm
Is in the telling.

ARRIVING AT A CONCLUSION.

WILLIE SLIMSON: "Mamma, does Santa Claus get his sleigh on Christmas Eve and drive to all the houses of the little boys and girls?"
Mrs. Slimson: "Yes."
Willie: "And does he stop at each chimney as he goes along, and leave the right things?"
Mrs. Slimson: "Yes."
Willie: "He must be pretty quick to visit all the little boys and girls in one night."
Mrs. Slimson: "He is, dear."
Willie (thoughtfully): "I don't believe he does it that way."
Mrs. Slimson: "How do you think he does it?"
Willie: "I think he plans ahead and does some of the work beforehand."
Mrs. Slimson: "What makes you think so?"
Willie: "Well I notice that he's got all my presents put away in one of the cupboards already."

CHRISTMAS DAY WITH THE QUEEN.

THE Queen is a true Englishwoman in her love of Christmas, and she has never allowed one jot of the ceremonies and customs connected with the 25th of December to be abated by those about her.

To take but one trivial instance, Her Majesty has remained faithful to the cult of Christmas cards. As early as in November a large selection is sent from the leading London houses, and often the advice of her ladies-in-waiting is asked as to what are the newest in shape and design, and the most suitable for the season; indeed, almost invariably a Christmas card, with not unfrequently a line in Her Majesty's own flowing handwriting, will accompany a more substantial gift to one of her old servants and humble friends. Incredible though it may seem, Queen Victoria's own personal gift list each Christmas comes up to nearly a thousand presents, for not only does she offer some token of goodwill to every member of her own immense family, but she never forgets her old friends' children and grandchildren, and her one-time maids-of-honour, who have now married and made homes of their own.

It is hardly necessary to assert once more the fact of Her Majesty's kindness to her old servants. Whoever else is forgotten, they are remembered when Christmas comes round, and those of the Queen's dressers who have become supernumerary from her service, come back for that one week to Windsor or Osborne, as the case may be, and assist in the thousand-and-one special small duties which then have to be performed.

One touching and curious custom prevails in regard to the Queen's oldest servants. All those retainers who formed part of her household when the late Prince Consort was master of the house are given pieces of silver plate—the choice of the object being left to their own discretion—and on Christmas Day each fortunate recipient receives his gift, together with a large black-bordered card inscribed: "With good wishes from Her Majesty and the Prince Consort."

As may be easily imagined, Her Majesty receives a very varied and extraordinary assortment of Christmas presents each year, from the priceless gift, generally consisting of a gold piece of plate, richly studded with gems, sent from St. Petersburg, to the curiously simple offerings which occasionally find their way into the Royal presence. On one occasion a poor Irish woman implored a lady whom she knew to be connected with the Court to transmit two new-laid eggs to Her Majesty on Christmas morning, and, breaking for once through her rule of not accepting presents with the donor's name attached, the Queen gladdened her Irish subject's heart by accepting the gift.

In the old days various kinds of food were considered the most suitable Christmas present you could send to a dear friend. Her Majesty's German relations evidently hold this to be still true, and several of the dishes which are prominent either on the Queen's Christmas dinner table, or on the splendid side-board, serve to remind her pleasantly of those who are far away.

The late Tsar for many years sent a Royal Sturgeon, and the custom has probably been kept up by his son. The King of Saxony is represented by a splendid boar's head truffled. The Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin always sends his kinswoman a splendid pâté

de foie gras, inclosed in a crust, and resembling a gigantic English pork pie. The Crown Princess of Sparta, one of Her Majesty's German grand-daughters, has of late years sent a case of special currants and spices from her far-away Greek home.

A similar gift to that of the King of Saxony arrives from the young Emperor of Germany, who also adds one of the famous woodcock pies in which German housewives delight. The Empress Frederick never omits a case of gingerbread, a German delicacy of which her father was very fond, and in good time for the Christmas dinner arrive twelve dozen bottles of the choicest Tokay from the Emperor of Austria. The baron of beef, which is, of course, British, is always supplied by the same Windsor butcher, and is invariably served on an immense silver dish which was once the private property of Henry VIII.

Two hundred plum-puddings are turned out of the Royal kitchens, and the mince-meat is made from a very old recipe introduced by King James I. Immediately after the plum-pudding, Stilton cheese is handed round, and then follow roast chestnuts, served in gold and silver sweetmeat baskets. Those who have the honour of assisting at Her Majesty's Christmas dinner, eat off gold and silver plate, the dessert service generally used being the famous Sèvres set, which, purchased by George IV., is the private property of Her Majesty; it is valued at £50,000.

Among other trophies generally placed on the table or side-board on Christmas Day, is the peacock studded with precious stones, and the Indian tiger's head, whose diamond teeth and gold tongue is a source of great interest to the younger members of the Royal Family. The menu is, curiously enough, written in a mixture of French, German, and English, according to what the dinner may consist of, and is inscribed on a very unpretentious card headed by the Royal monogram, and a view of Windsor, Osborne, or Balmoral.

The lovely woods and glens of Balmoral supply most of the Christmas decorations of Windsor and Osborne, but all the mistletoe is found in Windsor Great Park. The dried heather, stag-horn moss, and rowan berries, are made into large wreaths early in the autumn, and are kept in damp cellars until the day comes when they have to be sent to England. Her Majesty sets the example herself of wearing a little nosegay of holly and mistletoe; this has, on more than one occasion, been pinned on to her gown by the Koh-i-noor.

At Court, as elsewhere, Christmas is essentially the children's festival, and during the day that the terrible news of Prince Henry of Battenberg's death arrived in the Isle of Wight, Her Majesty whispered to one of her intimate friends: "I am glad this did not happen before Christmas, because of the children."

During the years that Her Majesty took charge of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught's little ones, there was, round Her Majesty, quite a gathering of grandchildren each Christmas Day, and those gifts presented by her to the children are always laid out in Her Majesty's own room; indeed, until quite lately, the Queen always presented her gifts to the household herself.

The Queen's own presents are all arranged in due sequence in the library or in some other suitable apartment, and in each case the name of the donor is attached to the present. Nothing pleases Queen Victoria better than to receive a piece of needlework or embroidery done by the childish fingers of one of her childish descendants, it is in this form that the gift sent by the German Emperor and Empress's tiny daughter always comes.

The Royal household always enjoys "hearing the waits," and these, when Her Majesty is spending Christmas at Osborne, consist of the choir of Whippingham Church. They make their appearance at the Castle, not only on Christmas Eve, but also on the evening of Christmas Day. Both Her Majesty and Princess Beatrice are very fond of the old English carols.

For long after Christmas Day, Christmas fare makes its appearance at the Royal table. Mountains of mince-pies, sacks of roast chestnuts, thousands of crackers, and pounds of plum-pudding, both hot and cold, are consumed by the Royal household.

There are quite as grand doings in the servants' hall as there are in the Royal dining-room. Her Majesty likes everyone about her to be happy during the Christmas days, and it is characteristic of her carefulness that from the first day she began housekeeping on her own account, Her Majesty made it a rule that every member of her household should be given time for going to church on Sunday, and on Christmas Day, if not in the morning, then in the evening.

"HAS Willie Giggs a responsible position?" asked one girl.

"Yes," replied the other, "in one way. Every time his employer rings a bell he's expected to respond."

MAN'S HEAVY BURDEN.—Mrs. De Science: "If I am able to carry the baby about, I should think you ought to be."

Professor De Science: "You forget, my dear, that an average man has to carry an atmospheric pressure of fifteen tons, while woman, being smaller, does not have to carry over ten or twelve tons."

THAT CHILD WAS WHIPPED!

THERE is one young matron living in the suburbs who failed to enjoy her Yuletide turkey, though she added to it the stuffing and the toothsome apple sauce, and invited her friends to share it with her. It happens that she is the mother of a small girl whose angelic appearance is constantly remarked, and who is invariably borrowed by an artist friend when he is commissioned to paint a cherub.

Handsome is, however, as handsome behaves itself, and those who know Miss Ethel best admire her least.

The guests had all assembled, and the hostess, serene in the quality of the soup and Ethel's promise of good behaviour, was all smiles.

Ethel had wedged herself between her young aunt and a potential admirer on the sofa.

"Well, Miss Ethel," said that unconscious youth smiling at her over his chrysanthemum, "are you glad to see me?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. de Lay," was the smiling reply, "I'm glad mamma asked you; she said she hated to do it, for you were so fussy that she would be in agony lest anything should go wrong, but she thought that maybe when you saw how happy and comfortable she and papa were, you might ask Aunt Edith—why, Aunt Edith, what is the matter?"

In the awful pause which followed, dinner was announced. By the time that dessert was brought on the table the hostess was sufficiently composed to say to her right-hand neighbour:

"Only think, Mrs. Silvertown, I forgot the greatest holiday of the year, and all my best silver is in the vault at the safe deposit, and I couldn't get it out."

Then above the murmur of sympathy rose a sweet, childish voice, saying:

"But, mamma, don't you remember? You said that after all it was a good thing, for now you could borrow grandma's service, and those horrid Silvertowns would think that if that was only your second best the other must be very handsome indeed."

And then, with one accord, the guests began to speak concerning the weather.

"How do you know that it was a man that wrote this novel?"

Helen: "Because the story takes you over a space of ten years, and the heroine never changes her dress but once."

A LAWYER was questioning a widow the other day about her history.

"My history," she replied, "is simplicity itself. My first was the happiness of my life, my second was goodness itself, my third—"

"Excuse me, madam," interrupted the lawyer, "but really we aren't here to discuss charades."

SCHMIDT: "I am puzzled what to buy my uncle for a birthday present. He is fearfully stingy, and no matter what I give him he lays it aside and never uses it."

Hufnagel: "If that's so you can get off very cheaply indeed."

"How so?"

"Fill half-a-dozen bottles with water, seal them up well, label them 'Old Gin,' or 'Old Cognac,' and he will never be the wiser."

"Pearson's Weekly" Railway Insurance.

438 INSURANCE CLAIMS HAVE BEEN PAID.

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INSURANCE TICKET Applicable to passenger trains in Great Britain and Ireland.

Issued under Section 33 of the Ocean Accident and Guarantee Company, Limited, Act, 1891.

ONE THOUSAND POUNDS

will be paid by the above Corporation to the legal representative of any person killed by an accident to the train in which the deceased was an ordinary ticket-bearing passenger (including holders of season and excursion tickets), and who, at the time of such accident, had in his, or her, possession, this coupon ticket or the paper in which it is, with his, or her, usual signature, written in ink or pencil on the space provided below, which is the essence of this contract. This paper may be kept at his, or her, place of abode, so long as the coupon is signed.

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This Insurance holds good for the current week of issue only, and entitles the holder to the benefit of, and is subject to, the conditions of the "Ocean Accident and Guarantee Company, Limited, Act," 1890, Clauses No. 2 and 3.

The purchase of this publication is admitted to be the payment of a Premium under Sec. 34 of the Act. A Print of the Act can be seen at the office of this Journal, or of the said Corporation. No person can recover on more than one Coupon Ticket of this paper in respect of the same risk.

Signature

Available from 5 p.m. on Friday, December 16th, 1896, until Midnight, Saturday, December 26th, 1896. (See column 3, page 374.)

As useful as th' umbrella you took in mistake,
Or ISOBEL'S HOME COOKERY in making a cake.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

WHERE THE TINSEL AND GLASS DECORATIONS
COME FROM.

How many of the hundreds of thousands of children and grown people who have enjoyed the sight of, and helped to fasten the many fragile ornaments to, the Christmas tree, know whence these dainty-nothings come? At least nine-tenths of the world's supply of these flimsy knick-knacks come from the Thüringen-Wald; the forest of Thüringen, in Central Germany. Nothing could more appropriately be called the storeroom and workshop of Santa Claus than these elevated, as well as isolated, forest-clad mountain regions.

The past year marked an epoch in the glass-blowing industries of the Thüringen-Wald. The people celebrated the 300th anniversary of the establishment of this art among them.

Every cottage among the mountains is a complete little factory, which turns out just as many goods as the numerical strength of the family permits. Everybody works, from the venerable grandparents, if they be alive, to the smallest child able to toddle.

As a rule, the elder members of the family—the father, mother, and grown sons—perform the most difficult and hardest work: that of blowing and shaping the glass ornaments. The blowers generally sit three to five round a table, each making his particular pattern as suits his fancy. The three chief points of all absorbing importance observed are speed, cheapness, and quality. The people might be said to be a race of artists in their particular line, and there is little waste from family designs. The glass used a great deal is known in the trade as flashed glass. The workman has two pots, one with coloured and one without any mixture. As the work requires, he dips his blow-pipe in one or the other, sometimes mixing the two substances.

To produce the film of colour he quickly immerses his bulb in the colouring fluid, which gives the object a marvellous lustre. The most delicate shading is obtained by eating away the colour by means of fluoric acid, which is frequently employed, and most beautiful effects are thus produced. No one has seen these variegated Christmas-tree decorations without marveling at the intense brilliancy of their colour. These superb effects are obtained by the use of metallic oxides, and are generally applied by some of the children of the family.

As soon as the object leaves the glass-blowing hand it is passed to some other member of the family whose duty it is to fasten an eye or a hook, as the case may be, to the ornament. If to be dyed it goes to another, who stands at the bath and dips every object with lightning rapidity. He or she then hands it to some child, who puts it on a long stick for the drying oven. If an oven is not to be had, the heat of the room or the sun has to perform this office. Then the silvering, which gives an additional lustre to the object, is attended to. This is done by dropping some quicksilver solution through a small opening left for that purpose.

The final touches are then given the ornament in the buffing, or polishing with soft cotton batting. After they have passed through these various processes they are all carefully carried into another room. Here they are placed in large, brilliant heaps on tables, chairs, or whatever is handy.

A stranger suddenly entering such a room, not knowing what its contents were, could readily imagine himself in Aladdin's treasure chamber.

81 BURGLARY CLAIMS HAVE
BEEN PAID.

THE
Ocean Accident & Guarantee Corporation,
LIMITED.

Head Offices: 40 to 44, MOORGATE ST., LONDON, E.C.

COUPON COVERING LOSS OF £20
BY BURGLARY OR HOUSEBREAKING.

The Ocean Accident and Guarantee Corporation, Limited, will pay the Householder or any occupied private Dwelling-house in the United Kingdom (the rateable value of which is over £15 in Urban Districts and over £10 in Rural Districts) the value of any goods (other than coins, money, or securities of any kind) lost through Burglary or Housebreaking, with forcible entry, up to the amount of £20, provided the current and two previous weeks' issues of *Pearson's Weekly* with the Coupons signed in ink with the usual signature of the Claimant (such Coupons being so signed prior to the time of the Burglary or Housebreaking taking place), be sent with notice of claim, which must be reported to the Corporation as above, within 48 hours of its occurrence. Provided also that evidence of the regular and previous purchase of the current and two previous weeks' issue of the paper be given; also that satisfactory proof of the Burglary or Housebreaking, and of the loss and value of the goods, and every particular required by the Corporation be furnished to them. For the purposes of this Coupon an occupied dwelling-house shall be deemed to be a house in which there was, at the time of the Burglary or Housebreaking being committed, at least one person, such person being legally on the premises, and using the premises as his or her ordinary place of abode, or a responsible person placed in charge of the premises by the said Householder. No claim is paid where any member of Householder's family, servants, or other inmates of house are in any way concerned. No more than one Coupon from this paper can be claimed under by any one Householder. In other respects this Coupon carries the benefits of, and is subject to the conditions of, the ordinary Burglary Policy of the Corporation.

Signature _____

December 26th, 1896.

(To be written in ink.)



MUSIC ON THE MARCH.

A CORRESPONDENT from Russia writes:

"In no civilised army, I believe, is the use of song to enliven toil so prevalent as among the Russians.

"Shabbily and scantily clad, begrimed with dust and sweat in summer, bespattered and bedraggled with mud in autumn, clothed with snow in winter, with icicles lips and beards; at all times and in all weathers, along Russia's wretched roads and ways, one may meet her soldiers, briskly covering the ground after long and forced marches; forlorn and weary-looking objects, drab-coloured spectacles, not attractive to the eye, but ever with the cheery song issuing from throats which swallow no better food than a thin soup cooked from refuse cabbage leaves, and 'chunks' of coarse black bread.

"And that almost ceaseless song, plaintive though the airs invariably are, seems not only to buoy their spirits up, but to raise them in the eyes of the spectator from over-driven hopeless slaves of an autocratic military system to cheery and willing endurers.

"Hordes of Cossacks may be met too, who have not stirred from the saddle for long, weary hours, and in their case the never-flagging chorus is enlivened by tambourine accompaniments from perhaps one warrior out of each fifty.

"During the manoeuvres here this summer I saw quite an up-to-date innovation added by a cavalry squadron by way of further enlivenment.

"All the troopers were singing in their usual vigorous fashion, while in the front rank of the first troop, one man made music on a tambourine, another with cymbals, and between them a third carried, as though it were the standard of the regiment, a long pole high aloft, on which was suspended a gorgeously clad scarlet doll about the size of a two-year-old infant; and, worked by strings, this strange apparition jerked out its legs and arms to the rude time of this crude music, doing many of the modern music-hall dancers' high kicks, her long, flaxen hair flying wildly in the wind."

WHY SCOTCH POETRY HURTS THE
FRENCH PEOPLE.

TAKE this verse of Burns':

"Oh, were thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie tae the angry air,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee."

Now read this literal translation of what the Frenchman makes of it:

"Oh, if thou wert exposed to the cold hurricane,
On the meadow down there, on the meadow down there,

Opposing my plaid to its anger,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee,"

and you will have some idea of what Burns must sound like to the afflicted French.

CHARITY ON THE CHEAP.

As the days draw in, the haberdashers begin to make preparations for Christmas. Already articles suitable for the holidays are to be found on the counters of these shops, and samples are being sent to customers.

One of the grimmest satires of the season, however, is a sample of what is described as "a special purchase of heavy flannelettes," which bears in very large type the words, "suitable for charitable purposes." Is this an evidence that specially cheap articles are manufactured on purpose to tempt the so-called charitably disposed, who desire to make a great show at a little cost? or is this sort of shoddy material considered good enough for the purpose of being given away?

It is, in any case, not a pleasant reflection at a time when the spirit of Charity is supposed to celebrate the anniversary of its birth.

As hot as an oven, as damp as a frog,
As gay as a lark, as sick as a dog.

THE CONVICTS' JOKE.

A GREAT many people believe that convicts are regaled with roast beef and plum-pudding on Christmas day, but this is not so, each prisoner has, without any exception, the diet prescribed for the day. If Christmas Day falls on a Sunday the convict has his usual bread-and-cheese dinner, and so on. It is a mistake to think that the prisoner in Her Majesty's local prison, or the more terrible convict station, finds on this festive occasion any relaxation of the iron rule that prevails at all penal establishments.

However, one Christmas-time the inmates of a large convict prison rose to the occasion and relieved the terrible monotony of their existence by perpetrating a huge joke. By sundry clandestine whisperings, it was secretly resolved to "ring the old year out and the new year in" in a novel manner. It was understood by all the prisoners that they should place all their tin-ware—consisting of washhand basin, water-jug, plate, candlestick, etc.—on their table, all in readiness for the clock to strike twelve.

Every man was ready, and just as the last stroke chimed out all the tin fell with a loud crash and a clatter! It brought out all the night warders, with their swords drawn; but when they looked into the cells, all the inmates were comfortably sleeping, some actually snoring, while the utensils were all in their proper places.

The warders were compelled to wink at it—they could not report all the prisoners, for there were not sufficient punishment cells in the gaol to accommodate one half, and so they were left to enjoy their little joke in peace.

FOLLOWING GOOD ADVICE.

"THERE is such a thing as bein' in the habit of takin' things too literal," said the old settler in Texas, who had been in the country for four years; "and Wall-eyed Bowker is 'bout as good an example of it as I know of."

"What has he been doing now?" asked the postmaster.

"Yesterday, the preacher, he says, it should be the duty of us all to put sunshine in the hearts of our fellow men, and what does Bowker do but follow up the idea by lettin' daylight into a Chinaman."

MANAGER: "How many single daughters has that man Boomer?"

Clerk: "Three."

Manager: "Add a guinea to his gas bill and see that the meter at his house is geared higher."

AWKWARD YOUTHS.—Little Dick: "Seems to me the older folks grow the more awkward they get."

Mamma: "Why so?"

Little Dick: "I can strap sister's skates on in two minutes, but it takes Mr. Nicofel'o 'bout half-an-hour."

A JUDGE's little daughter, who had attended her father's court for the first time, was very much interested in the proceedings. After her return home she told her mother:

"Papa made a speech, and several other men made speeches to twelve men who sat all together, and then these twelve men were put in a dark chamber to be developed."

The Ever-present Dangers

To Cyclists of	To Football Players of
SIDE-SLIP,	FROSTY GROUND,
COLLISIONS,	ROUGH SCRUMS,
BROKEN CHAINS,	HEAVY KICKS,
AND	AND
FAULTY BRAKES,	FOULS,

Make it imperative that every devotee of
either of these sports should



THEY WILL THEN BE INSURED AGAINST ACCIDENT TO
THE TUNE OF £100.

Serial Story.

***** The STORY of the FOURTH
EMPIRE of FRANCE.

AN

American Emperor.

By Louis Tracy.
Author of "THE FINAL WAR," etc., etc.

Illustrated by E. S. Pope.

CHAPTER I.

A BOX AT THE OPERA.

JEROME K. VANSITTART was the richest man in the world. He owned vast territories; he controlled railways and fleets; cities paid him tribute, and myriads of workers toiled that his wealth might magnify unceasingly.

In a word, he was a State rather than an individual. Computations of the amount of his fortune differed by scores of millions sterling, and the public estimate of his riches was based more upon cubical measurements than the common standard of dollars and cents.

Thus, when the Sunday edition of the NEW YORK HERALD sought to enlighten its readers as to the financial calibre of their most remarkable fellow-citizen, it summed him up as follows:

"If Vansittart wished to build his Fifth Avenue residence of solid gold he could do so, and then pave the Avenue and West 57th Street with silver in front of his house."

The WORLD, which was nominally opposed to him, stuck to the illustration:

"Vansittart is going to lay out 56th Street in copper," it said. "He has just added a cent per ton to freight rates on the New York Central."

Of course, the democratic JOURNAL must develop the phrase.

"There is trouble on Wall Street," wrote the city editor. "Vansittart shook up Lake

Shores yesterday, and knocked diamond sparks out of every bear on 'Change.'

Strange circumstances had conspired to produce this man—the economic phenomenon of the United States.

He was the heir of the princes of American industry. A weird medley of marriage and death had added here a fair domain, there a huge section of some populous commune. Two trans-continental railroads had scarce fallen to his lot before the chief riverway of the Eastern States was added to the inheritance, to be quickly succeeded by three magnificent lines of Atlantic steamers.

He was conscious only of the power of his money. Its extent could merely be approximately gauged by annual valuation.

It was possible, therefore, for him to suddenly carry out strange resolves which shook the financial world by their magnitude and thoroughness. On one occasion, whilst travelling to St. Louis from Chicago, his train narrowly escaped being wrecked in a collision caused by two jealously competing companies' tracks crossing each other. By telegraph he promptly instructed his agents to buy up both systems. The marvellous sequel to the story came when within twelve months the receipts were quadrupled by judicious management and economical administration. For the first time in their history the lines paid a dividend.

Again, he was but ill-served in a hotel by a careless waiter. Vansittart stepped out to the office, exchanged a few words with the proprietor, wrote a cheque, and returned: "I now own this place," he said to the waiter, "and if you don't look after the comfort of the guests, including myself, you will be discharged."

Of course, the tale was told, with its inevitable result—the hotel soon required to be enlarged to accommodate the crowds that flocked to it.

Demagogues who thundered fierce philippics against the unprecedented aggregation of riches in the lap of this one individual invariably added, as though grudgingly and deprecatingly, the fact: "Personally, Vansittart is an uncommonly nice fellow."

And this was but the bare truth. He might best be described as a splendid example of the cultured American gentleman, which means that he was clever, polished, strong in principle and weak only in his affections, generous to the utmost limit of common sense, courteous and considerate to all who came within reach of his magnetic personality.

He was young, but twenty-six years of age, when this strange and eventful history opened; athletic, as his school record at Winchester and his college triumphs at Yale clearly showed; somewhat inclined to be studious, but in unexpected directions of which his ordinary scholastic course gave slight signs. Languages and engineering were his professed hobbies, and in these he excelled.

Only his few intimate friends realised that some day he might perhaps write an introspective book that would astonish the world, and its title would be: "Influences that mould character," for no other man of his years had read so much or thought so deeply concerning this, his favourite subject for speculation and comparative analysis.

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Had Vansittart's own wishes been consulted in the ordering of his destiny he would have gone through life in the leisurely ease of a man whose pleasant patrimony is doled out to him by quarterly payments from Government stocks.

But in his case this was impossible. Inheriting more ample revenues and more real power than any crowned king, and finding, when he came to man's estate, that anything like personal supervision of the manifold interests he controlled was out of the question, he nevertheless firmly established an all-pervading sense of fairness and justice in the conduct of his affairs.

Himself a miracle of individualism, he was an ardent advocate of the collective principle. One remarkable outcome of the spirit and practice of comradeship which he had engendered among his subordinates was that at the end of five years after he had attained his majority his wealth had consolidated to a degree that astounded men of narrow intellectual calibre, whilst it gratified his own utilitarian theories.

Although in manner and conversation a versatile and well-informed man of the world, his tastes were simple. A high-tempered horse, a readable book, a perfect gun, a well-balanced salmon-rod—these were his chief desires. For the rest, the potentiality of money had ceased, or it had not yet begun.

And he had never been in love.

A vulgar attachment had no charms for him, and he drew back nervously from the social environments which must inevitably surround him when he at last contracted a union suitable to his rank and condition.

As this, at any rate, was the explanation he offered to his friends when they rallied him on the question of matrimony, the experienced reader will quickly perceive that the one woman in the world for whom he would risk far more than the thralldom of married life had not yet fitted forth from the chaos of humanity into his existence.

Yet on the night when this story opens he was pre-occupied to an unusual degree, and the inspiring cause was a woman.

The magnificent Opera House on Broadway was crammed with fashionable New York. A good opera by a French company was produced that evening for the first time, and expectation rose high concerning the work.

Seats were at a premium, and had steadily advanced in price during weeks past. When New York Society returns to the capital from Newport or Saratoga, it travels in a groove, and woe betide the fashionable dame who was unable to see and be seen at this premiere—the culminating point of a brilliant season.

Even Vansittart, lounging easily in his comfortable box on the first tier, felt glad that he was spared the crush and bustle of the stalls and circle, and he seldom congratulated himself upon the immunity from worry conferred by wealth, for he knew too well what nonsense it was to think that money could buy freedom from care.

But he had dined well, with his greatest friend, Dick Harland, an Englishman with a sound heart, a healthy appetite, and a poorly-lined pocket, who had left him for the moment to drive to his hotel for a forgotten overcoat.

The two were classmates at Winchester, and had remained faithful to their boyish liking for each other.

Harland was now visiting New York, but he refused to stay at Vansittart's mansion, nor would he allow his all-powerful comrade to put him in the way of developing his scanty resources.

His explanation was characteristic. "I regard you always as Jerry Vansittart," he wrote, "the chap who used to go shares with me in sixpennyworth of gingerbread and oranges, when either of us was broke at the end of the term, and I feel that if I met you now as a social equal, or took your help in forwarding my career" (Dick's career threatened to develop into that useful but unremunerative calling, a gentleman jockey), "we would not be quite the same to each other. Give me a quiet hour during my visit to New York, when we can have a quiet jaw about old times, and I shall be more than pleased."

Vansittart humoured his wish, but the hour had spread into a whole afternoon, and Harland could not decline the subsequent dinner and a vacant chair in the millionaire's box at the opera.

Whilst awaiting the arrival of his friend, Vansittart, who was effectively screened from observation by a curtain, leisurely surveyed the occupants of the other boxes.

Most of the people were known to him, and those who were not were uninteresting, until his eye lit upon the form of a lady who sat in lonely state directly opposite to him.

True, she was not unaccompanied, as an older woman sat near her, but in a manner suggesting an attendant rather than a chaperon.

In repose, the face of the fair unknown had the clearly cut outline and delicate grace of a beautiful statue. But when she turned to speak to her companion, it manifestly



brightened with rare animation, and when she smiled, Vansittart thought he had never before seen so lovely a woman.

She was simply, almost poorly, dressed, yet in her dark hair sparkled a tiara that a queen might have worn, and

Vansittart felt that under ordinary circumstances none but persons of considerable means could afford to rent a box at the Metropolitan Opera House on these occasions.

Who was she? Not a New Yorker, as no such woman could be in the front rank of society and yet remain outside his circle of acquaintances. She must be a foreigner, a Frenchwoman, or an Italian, for her alternating moods of



stateliness and vivacity, the elegance of her manner and the dark colour of her eyes and hair, gave reasonable suggestion of either nationality.

Vansittart was first puzzled, then interested, then absurdly annoyed.

What did it possibly matter to him who the lady was? So he settled himself back in his box to

listen to the first strains of the overture, and in the next moment found himself hesitating whether or not to ring for an attendant, and try to solve the mystery.

Now, he was a man who never allowed himself to waver in a resolution. The very fact that he detected a momentary disinclination to pursue the inquiry further was sufficient to impel him to forthwith press the button of the electric bell, and in that simple act he committed himself to the greatest task ever yet undertaken by one man.

The message spasmodically jarred into life on the indicator was destined to fill the civilised world with its clamour, but the obsequious attendant who came in answer to the bell little knew that he was the first of a countless host of men and women who would bow before that imperious summons.

"Ask the acting manager to be good enough to see me at his convenience," said Vansittart, and in a little while the gentleman thus designated entered, for in such a matter the millionaire's wish was law.

"Mr. Frohman," explained Vansittart, "I wish to know something of the lady in the opposite box. Can you tell me her name and any facts connected with her?"

"She is something of an enigma, sir," was the answer. "The name in which she engages her box is 'Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier.' She occupies a suite of apartments in the Netherlands Hotel, and her companion is the Comtesse de Fontainebleau. Notwithstanding her unassuming name, the younger lady is obviously a woman of considerable distinction."

Both men were now looking straight at the persons they were discussing, and Mademoiselle de Montpensier noticed them. She slightly withdrew from observation and the Comtesse at the same moment moved her chair, not from necessity but seemingly by force of habit.

Vansittart regretted his involuntary rudeness when too late.

"The Comtesse de Fontainebleau treats her as though she were a reigning monarch," he said with a smile.

"There are kingdoms of all sizes, sir," replied Mr. Frohman. "Some are no larger than an ordinary room."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because this young lady puzzles me. I am certain that she is not rich, yet she invariably orders our most expensive box and will accept no other. She is very gracious and pleasant in manner but extremely reserved. She wears finer diamonds than any woman in America, diamonds that cannot be bought nowadays, but her dress is plain and not costly. There are many contradictions in her speech and habits, and I am only certain of one thing in regard to her. She is undoubtedly a well-born and most charming woman."

"How is it I have not seen her before?"

"She has only lived in New York for about a month, sir, and I am afraid that we are now honoured by your presence for the first time this season."

Vansittart smiled. "You are right, Mr. Frohman," he said; "I must really mend my ways."

At this moment Harland entered.

"Sorry for being late, old chap," he exclaimed. "I mislaid my check, and the scoundrel in charge of the cloak-room treated me like a thief until I found it. By Jove, what a stunning woman!"

His eyes were riveted on Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who had leaned forward in her absorption with the beautiful strains of the *adagio* movement.

The others laughed at his words, and the official left the two friends together.

"What has amused you?" said Harland.

Vansittart told him of the preceding conversation, and the subject dropped.

As the night progressed the American repeatedly found himself covertly looking at the fair unknown and speculating upon her identity. He was so ill at ease that even the unobservant Harland could not help commenting on it.

"What is the matter, Jerry?" he said at last; "you don't seem up to the mark. Had you dined at my hotel I should have blamed the cook; but I suppose that such an explanation can hardly apply to that palace of yours in Fifth Avenue."

Not often was Vansittart cornered for a phrase. But this time he could offer no valid excuse for his pre-occupation, and without troubling to analyse his motives he replied:

"The fact is, Dick, that I feel something of the terrible isolation which, we are told, surrounds a powerful king. I suffer the infliction of being regarded as a great potentate in the world of finance and commerce, and I often shudder at the thought that I have no real friend, no hearty chum, as you used to be, old fellow."

The unwonted bitterness in his tone surprised both

As brown as a berry, as white as the foam.
As precious as "Isobel's" DRESSMAKING AT HOME.

speaker and listener, and neither uttered a word for some moments.

"So you even suspect me," said Harland, at length, colouring deeply.

"Suspect! No. But why do you pretend that our lives must practically remain apart? Why do you insist upon the difference between our stations? Why do you regard the payment of a hotel bill as marking your independence?"



Vansittart was personally amazed at this outburst. He had harbored no such thoughts. He was the last man in the world to give voice to them. Whence did this come, and why? He was astounded.

"This is a rum business," said another person. "Here am I, a poor devil buying racehorses on commission, accused of swiping the friendship of my greatest pal who unfortunately happens to be the lion millionaire on earth. I'll tell you what, Jerry. I can't write a letter worth a cent, and I am a frightful duffer at saying 'no' when I want the other chap to think I would like to say 'yes,' but if you will call me your secretary, and give me an office and five hundred a year I'll stick to you till you tell me to quit."

"Call it five thousand and it's a bargain," cried Vansittart eagerly.

Harland hesitated. "Honestly, Jerry, I am not worth it," he said, adding with hesitation, "unless you let me look after your stable, too. I might save the money there."

Vansittart laughed heartily. "You have hit the nail on the head first time, Dick," he said. "You shall not be my secretary, but my Master of the Horse!"

The two men shook hands on the contract, whilst Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier, attracted by their unusual behaviour, gazed at them steadily for a little while through her luncheon.

And she had the faculty which is invaluable to a monarch—she never forgot a face.

CHAPTER II.

MONSIEUR ET MADAMESELLE.

"I don't think you were so fond of music, Jerry. As for me, I am just getting the hang of it. Hitherto, I believed that the 'Fast-Post Galop' shocked everything, but Signor Vansittart knows a bit, doesn't he?"

Vansittart chuckled as he listened to Harland's remarks. Five successive nights had they followed the dulcet strains of French and Italian romantic opera, until Dick, in despair, seriously endeavored to grasp the meaning of that which enthralls the crowd.

It was not the voice of Placido nor the baton of Hanswurst that brought Vansittart to the theatre. But with reference to the lady he had been mute, and he heard with apparent indifference Harland's frequent and highly laudatory comments upon her appearance and style.

"What a figure for the box seat in a spin down to Herington," he had said. "How she would paralyze 'em on the Bow. She's not unlike Evelyn. You remember her, don't you? Little thing with flaxen hair and blue eyes. You sold a new hat at half price so as to raise the price of some chocolate when mother brought her to school one day. Evelyn looks smart now, I can assure you, but this one is on the dark and tragic side. Wouldn't you like to see her in war paint?"

"What on earth are you talking about?" laughed Vansittart.

"I mean that she must be killing when dressed for dinner or a dance, and not in everlasting black. She ought to wear a coronet and a fur cloak."

Harland had an ermine robe in his mind, but he was happily oblivious of conventionalities in phrase or thought.

Nevertheless Vansittart was still separated from the lady by the width of the theatre, and he had ascertained by judicious inquiry that she had not evinced the slightest curiosity concerning him.

He felt intuitively that to seek an introduction in the ordinary way was hopeless. Such a woman was beyond the reach of society, and to gain her friendship or regard he must adopt some unusual method. Why he was so anxious to meet her, or what the result might be, he resolutely declined to ask himself.

Whilst Dick was puzzling his brains to find out why the writer of the "arguments" should call upon him to admire the consecutive fifth in the intermezzo, Vansittart was working out a plan of action.

"Dick," he said suddenly, "my trainer in Virginia writes to say that he wants me to inspect some brood mares before they join my stud. I am somewhat pressed for time just now. Will you go for me, starting to-morrow, and returning towards the close of the week?"

"Like a bird!" cried the unconscious Dick. "I know more about that game than I do about 'themes for the French horn' and 'symphonic diapasons.'"

Next day, as the result of a conference with Mr. Frohman, Vansittart rented every available box in the theatre for a month. He found that Mademoiselle de Montpensier paid daily for her accommodation.

The clerk in the box-office also had his instructions, and when the Comtesse de Fontainebleau presented herself he explained that Mr. Jerome K. Vansittart had acquired all the boxes for the use of his friends, but had instructed him

to say that the Comtesse and Mademoiselle would gratify him were they to use their box exactly when they chose.

"Am I to understand that we can pay Mr. Vansittart instead of the management of the theatre?" demanded the lady coldly.

"No, madam; the boxes are reserved for his guests."

"We are not Mr. Vansittart's guests," said the Comtesse with increasing asperity, and she swept out of the theatre.

As the result, neither lady was seen again, and Vansittart had not only the trouble of issuing invitations to fill his ill-advised purchase, but also the mortification of knowing that he figured as an ill-mannered plutocrat in the eyes of her whom he wished to conciliate.

One day he met her at the door of a fashionable shop in West Twenty-third Street. He was so surprised that he looked at her too earnestly, and she quickened her pace to regain her carriage. A cravache in the pavement caught the point of her parasol and jerked it from her hand. A newspaper boy darted forward, returned the article, and was rewarded with a quarter and a sweet smile.

Vansittart quietly swore at himself, ordered six dozen parasols from an astounded store-clerk, and discovered, when they arrived, that he had meant silk ties.

The incident put him in good humor again.

"I cannot for the life of me tell why I am making such an ass of myself," he reflected, "but I will speak to that woman somehow, even if she lives ever afterwards in the belief that I am a frightful cad. In such a case one longs for the easy portness of the youth of Broadway."

He tried a visit to the Netherlands Hotel, and charmed the manager by his interest in the affairs of that flourishing institution.

"Yes, sir, we have a good many people who stay here for long periods," he said, in reply to a question. "We have one pair of ladies here who are very distinguished. They give no trouble; but the younger one, who carries herself like an empress, actually wanted Louis Quatorze furniture in her sitting-room. Why, sir, it costs a small fortune to import it."

The cue was sufficient. Within two hours Vansittart owned the hotel, and a Louis Quatorze suite was forwarded the same afternoon.

What would happen next he didn't trouble to inquire, but events marched as rapidly as the fifth act of a transpontine melodrama.

That evening he received a delicately perfumed note, with a silver "H" and a fleur-de-lys stamped thereon, and it read as follows:

Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier desires to see Mr. Jerome K. Vansittart. Mademoiselle de Montpensier will await him at the Netherlands Hotel, to-morrow, at four p.m.

This message utterly nonplussed him. It was, in the first instance, quite inexplicable that there should be a communication of any sort from the lady, and this unusual circumstance was only made more complex by the emphatic phraseology employed.

Once, when in London, he had been "commanded" to visit the Queen at Windsor, but with the exception of this, to an American, unaccustomed word, the rest of the invitation was couched in language of dignified courtesy.

Here, on the other hand, he detected a hostile, almost menacing, tone, coupled with an imperative "fail not herein, or—!" Why, the thing sounded like a *lettre de cachet*. And how came it that the name of the older lady was wholly omitted?

Abandoning speculation as futile, he surprised Dick after dinner by taking an unexpected interest in the development and prospects of the Virginian stud farm, and, strange to relate, only slept the more soundly because of the confused state into which his ideas had become entangled whilst pursuing his strange quest.

Precisely at the appointed time he presented himself at the Netherlands Hotel. At the entrance to the ladies' suite he was received by a solemn porter, who inspected his card and ushered him at once into a spacious chamber, announcing his name with the painful precision of a Frenchman speaking English.

His first impression was that he had chosen the Louis Quatorze furniture with a singularly happy eye for effect, and then in a somewhat dim light, he became aware that Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier rose when he entered the room, whilst the Comtesse de Fontainebleau, who was present, remained seated and completely ignored him.

He would have spoken, but the younger lady anticipated him. In a singularly sweet voice, which rendered her foreign accents delightfully piquant and but ill-accommodated with her frigid politeness, she said:

"We have sent for you, Mr. Vansittart, to request an explanation of your attitude towards us. Whilst we cannot complain of any direct rudeness or incivility on your part, we cannot fail to notice that you are, for some reason best known to yourself, striving to thrust your personality upon us. That which was merely an inconvenience with regard to the opera has now become somewhat distressing, as it perhaps compels us to leave a quiet and suitable abode."

May we ask in what way we have earned these disagreeable attentions?"

During this address the lady looked at him steadily.

As fast as a raincoat, as bright as the sun,
As safe as the bank, as sure as a gun.

She made no attempt to relieve the situation by asking him to be seated, and although she used the plural form of speech the other woman gave no sign of acquiescence or even of interest. Her attitude was one of complete indifference.

Vansittart would have been confused had not a strong sense of resentment come to his aid. All the ridiculousness of his present position, and the folly of his previous actions vanished before the fact that a woman, younger than himself, and delicately beautiful, was treating him as though he were an ill-bred clown.

He looked her straight in the eyes as he replied, without a trace of nervousness or diffidence in his voice:

"There is little need in asking for an explanation, mademoiselle, when you have already condemned me as an officious and even offensive cad."

"We have not said so," she said, her eyebrows slightly elevated, and the ghost of a politely deprecating smile flitting across her features.

"No, but your manner is even more eloquent than your words. I have only to apologise for an apparent rudeness on my part, to promise that no further cause for misapprehension shall arise, and to withdraw."

For an instant the lady paused before she spoke, and Vansittart knew that he was now fighting in the enemy's territory.

"My words were carefully considered," she said, "and do not bear the extreme interpretation you place upon them."

"I am glad to think that you are now speaking for yourself, mademoiselle." This with a quiet glance towards the Comtesse.

The remark momentarily puzzled Mademoiselle de Montpensier. Then with a bright smile of comprehension, she explained:

"I have throughout uttered only my own sentiments, and any fault of expression or an ill choice of words arises solely from the fact that I am translating my thoughts into that which is to me a foreign language."

"You leave me nothing but apologies," he said with a touch of sadness.

"I would prefer an explanation." There was an easy return to her attitude of frigid politeness in the remark.

The American now became amused, and had the lady but known it, her case was already lost.

He looked around the room, and inquired, simply, but unexpectedly:

"May I sit down?"

The request annoyed her by its directness, but she could not refuse. Motioning him to a chair, she seated herself at some distance, and for the first time the Comtesse de Fontainebleau showed that she was other than an automaton by glancing covertly at Vansittart.

He found himself gazing fixedly at a finely modelled bust of Louis Philippe, which occupied the centre of the mantelpiece, but as neither of the ladies helped him by word or sign he had no option but to renew the attack.

"Do you know anything of me?" he said.

"I know that you are reported to be the most wealthy man in the world," replied Honorine.

"That is my chief characteristic, I fear."

"I also cannot fail to have noticed that you are very fond of the opera, but I really am unable to see how your many doubtless excellent qualities can affect this interview, Mr. Vansittart."

"They are most important, mademoiselle," he said gravely, "as evidence of motive. I at once plead guilty to the charge of seeking your acquaintance. I suppose my chief object in so doing was to gratify an idle curiosity. We were *vis-à-vis* at the opera, and you were strangers to New York society. At the same time, if I may say it without offence, you were obviously people of consequence, and it seemed odd to me that I had never met you. Personally, I rather avoid than court new acquaintances, but for some indefinable reason, which I have utterly failed to analyse, I was impelled to seek an introduction to you. When every other method failed, I tried what could be done with money. Being a novice in the art I suppose I went awkwardly to work, with the result that I am forced to make this unconvincing but quite true explanation of my presence here to-day."

Mademoiselle de Montpensier settled herself more comfortably in her chair before she answered:

"You interest me, Mr. Vansittart."

"I am delighted to find out that you can travel so far along my line of thought," was the quick reply. "Will you

permit me to ask my aunt, the Princess Marchesi, to call upon you?"

"The Princess Marchesi!" she cried in astonishment, turning to her companion as though to seek an explanation.

"Yes," said the Comtesse, speaking for the first time,



As fast as a raincoat, as bright as the sun,
As safe as the bank, as sure as a gun.

and in French, "a second marriage. The lady was known as 'la belle Americaine' of the American colony in Rome." "Oh! I understand. I shall be most pleased to receive—to be honoured by the company of the Princess," she went on, addressing Vansittart. "And I suppose that as you are my landlord, I had better be civil to you." This with a very pleasant laugh. "Will you take tea with us? Let me introduce you to the Comtesse de Fontainebleau."



introduce you to the Comtesse de Fontainebleau."

Vansittart was now more bewildered than ever. Nothing in the manner of either lady betrayed the slightest embarrassment at the queer turn taken by events. And who was the younger woman, a girl seemingly of twenty, who could thus juggle with a difficult situation and dispense so easily with the conveniences that necessarily govern social intercourse?

The Comtesse was evidently a *grande dame*, yet she treated

the other with marked deference notwithstanding the disparity in their ages and apparent rank.

Of one thing he was certain—he was dealing with no more adventures who maintained an absurd masquerade to cloak her designs. The affair was more mixed than ever, so he ceased any attempts to unravel it, trusting to the future to elucidate what was now puzzling in the extreme.

During the tea—the mere suggestion of which was an innovation upon American customs—he chatted pleasantly with the two ladies on commonplace topics, earning the kindly regard of the Comtesse by gliding off into French as fluently as though it were his mother tongue.

The sound of her native language tended to considerably raise the spirits of Mademoiselle de Montpensier. She was naturally a volatile and lively girl, and she now astonished and delighted Vansittart by her brightness and vivacity.

"Will you tell us," she said, with a meaning smile, "how much this cup of tea has cost you?"

"Nearly three million dollars," he replied promptly, responding to her humour, whilst he joined in the laughter at the extravagant conceit.

"And a lot of bad temper on my part at being kept from my favourite operas," she added.

"Ah," he said, "that cost cannot be measured in money. You make me bankrupt by the mere suggestion of it."

"I am pleased to note that you have acquired the French language to the best advantage," she cried. "But tell me, why did you not avoid all the trouble by requesting your aunt, the Princess, to call upon me?"

"Because I am a mere man. In what I shall venture to term affairs of the heart rather than the head, men never take the obvious course."

Honorine was now too much amused to repel this dramatic advance, but she changed the conversation.

"I am much obliged for the new suite of furniture, though I suppose you will raise the rent on account of it? Oh, you need not deny. Capitalist landlords are the worst with their poor tenants. But I really must have my box again."

"The theatre returns to its normal state to-night, mademoiselle, so far as you are concerned, and as the opera is *La Traviata*, I hope you will learn to be merciful to those who have erred."

Vansittart shortly afterwards took his leave, but not without a cordial invitation to come again.

When he had quitted the room Honorine said: "I find him droll, the American."

"And he is of good address, although so rich, mademoiselle," replied the Comtesse.

"Yes," said the other thoughtfully, "his wealth is a power greater than that of kings. Even I felt afraid to be so severe with him."

Vansittart walked slowly across the avenue to his own residence, trying to piece together scattered impressions from the midst of a medley of incongruities. At the door he met Harland, arrayed in breeches and gaiters, and about to try a new hack in Central Park.

"Where have you been, Jerry?" said his friend.

"I don't know. Having tea with an empress, I think."

"Hullo, a flirtation! What has come over you, old man? This sudden love of Italian opera, joined to worship of the teapot, suggests possibilities. It's not the fat woman who sang last night, I hope?"

"No, not the fat woman. Emperresses are never fat."

CHAPTER III.

THE REFUSAL AND THE RESOLVE.

VANSITTART was not a man to do things by halves. Once he had made up his mind to a course, he followed it with resistless energy, and before a fortnight had passed he was, in his own opinion, irretrievably committed to the task of wooing and winning Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier as his wife.

The novelty of the pursuit was in itself a recommendation to his ardent temperament. He did not ask himself whether or not that which men called love had come to him.

As already indicated, he was not one to whom affairs of the heart were matters of everyday occurrence. Marriage, of course, he had frequently contemplated as a distant possibility, and in the main it had presented itself to him as a disagreeable adjunct to his position. The fact that almost any woman in the world might be considered an eligible partner for this multi-millionaire had directly contributed to his general attitude upon the question. Now that he

was faced by an element of mystery and reserve, sympathies which had long lain dormant were awakened into fresh activity.

Repeated visits to the apartments occupied by the two ladies, often with his aunt, the Princess Marchesi, and occasionally alone, when he had infrequent opportunities of a *tête-à-tête* with Honorine, had revealed to him more clearly her many excellent qualities of head and heart.

But her history and surroundings were still impenetrably veiled.

True, his aunt had recognised in her a descendant of one of the many branches into which the Bourbon dynasty of France had split up since its dissolution. To her knowledge the lady had no special claim to consideration in this respect, and it was, to say the least, incomprehensible to a free-minded American that a really sensible woman like Mademoiselle de Montpensier, and a born leader of society such as the distinguished and pleasant-mannered Comtesse de Fontainebleau, should lend themselves to what seemed to him to be, if not trivial, at least unconvincing and inadequate devices in the conduct of their relations to each other, and to the ordinary affairs of life.

Vansittart, however, believed himself to be in love.

He also cherished the delusion that when a man is in love he fails to apply to his affairs the calm and equable mind which he would devote to mere matters of business.

In a word, he abandoned himself unquestioningly and utterly to his ideal, and definitely decided to contract an alliance with the beautiful and fascinating Frenchwoman.

Knowing something of her straightforwardness in action and disregard for conventionality, he determined to declare his views to her without delay or circumlocution. He put to her the question in so many words to be favoured with a private interview, and the request was granted with prompt brevity. As he neared her apartments at the appointed hour he tried hard to imagine himself to be an earnest and impassioned lover.

He almost found himself smiling at the nonchalance with which he approached his task. But as he had already crushed into nothingness so many doubtful circumstances he resolved almost fiercely not to allow any self-questioning now, but to go straight through with the business on the lines he had determined upon.

The two young people were by this time upon such terms of friendly intimacy that, under other conditions, their meeting would have admitted of an agreeable chat on mutually interesting topics. The manner of this *rencontre*, however, did not permit of ease.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier would not have been a woman had she failed to recognise that Vansittart had some powerful motive in so formally demanding an interview. There was, therefore, a silent constraint in her unaffected reception of him, and both found it difficult to maintain a conversation on commonplace lines.

Curiously enough, neither the man nor the woman seemed to be in sympathetic mood. Both knew that there was something hidden between them, and Vansittart, less tactful than the beautiful Frenchwoman, soon felt the situation to be intolerable.

He at once rose from the chair in which he had been seated at some distance from Honorine, walked over towards her, and, looking her straight in the face, said:

"I fear, mademoiselle, that I may shock and, perhaps, even pain you by the bluntness of what I am about to say, but it is impossible for me, where you are concerned, to adopt subterfuge or pretence. I feel, therefore, that the only course open to me is to put, in the fewest and plainest words, the object of my visit here to-day. I have come to ask you to be my wife."

He paused, being himself utterly unable to add a word in furtherance or extenuation of his strange avowal.

He had, of course, early that day planned many speeches and methods of declaring himself. They were all excellent to his thinking at the time, but they had all vanished into nothingness, and, at least, it might be urged that the lady could make no mistake as to what he meant, whilst he was inwardly amazed to find that his first lucid thought after the words had left his lips, was that he was now irretrievably committed to the supreme step of his career.

For once Mademoiselle de Montpensier was at a loss to frame an adequate reply. She blushed deeply, cast down her eyes, and Vansittart, in strange altruistic mood, found himself calmly reviewing the possibilities of her decision, and deciding quite judiciously that the chances were apparently in his favour.

Nothing but an everyday proverb came uppermost.

"The woman who hesitates is lost," he thought, and Mademoiselle de Montpensier undoubtedly hesitated.

At last she spoke, and her words came slowly but distinctly:

"I cannot deny, Mr. Vansittart," she said, "that your unlooked-for proposal is flattering to me. I will even go so far as to say that under other conditions, and with, perhaps, more mature reflection on the part of both of us, it might have even been agreeable to me; but I

must tell you, with the same openness and candour that you have displayed towards me, that our marriage is quite impossible."

Again Vansittart experienced the almost maddening emotion that it was his logical faculty rather than his heart which was disturbed by her answer.

What reason could such a woman find so completely

convincing in her decision? He was fully conscious of the fact that no living man, whatever his title or position, could offer a woman higher prospects than himself.

From her manner it was unreasonable to suppose that a prior affection controlled her resolve. During their brief acquaintance they had discovered many mutual sympathies,

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and, for his part, he thought he had never encountered in either sex a nature so closely allied to his own. Yet she had refused him, and he knew, without further questioning, that his case was hopeless.

The situation was too dramatic for other than simplicity. "If it is painful to you," he said, "to pursue the subject, I will forthwith drop it for ever, expressing the hope in the same breath that my momentary presumption will in no wise disturb our friendly relations. But I cannot help adding that I am surprised and grieved at your decision, and it will perhaps tend to mitigate my sorrow if you deem fit to give me some brief explanation of your evidently fixed purpose."

Honorine had now somewhat recovered her composure. She rose, quite frankly taking his hand in hers, and said:

"Even had you not asked me, I had already resolved to fully explain all that I feel must now be mysterious to you. And let me say in the first instance that I deeply regret that any inadvertence on my part should have led you to believe that any other outcome of the friendship between us was possible or probable. I cannot marry you because my life is already pledged to a pursuit which I have no option but to regard as dominating every personal wish and sentiment. You perhaps do not know that I am a lineal descendant of two lines of the Kings of France. To me alone this sad heritage is committed by fate, and fate alone can govern my destiny. I am but a mere puppet in the hands of an all-wise Providence."

"By the Salic Law a woman may not ascend the throne of France, but by the same law she who inherits that domain cannot marry other than its ruler. Were you the Emperor of France, Mr. Vansittart, though your kingdom did not extend beyond this door, and though you were poorer than the meanest domestic of this hotel, I should be compelled to become your wife, and I hope that in such a consummation fate would have been kind to me. Need I say more to show how impossible is our union, and at the same time how grateful I am for your regard?"

She sighed deeply as she spoke, and the two stood for some little while unable to find further expression for their tumultuous thoughts.

Jerome regarded the beautiful creature before him with a new feeling of reverential awe. His acute mind was quick to grasp all the hopelessness and vastness of the task to which she was pre-ordained. Had he sought through the wide world for a companion suited to the boundless wealth he possessed, he could have found no other woman so richly endowed.

Yet his inheritance was a reality, hers but a shadow. A pity, and the more pitiful because true.

In a sort of numb self-consciousness he thought that the dream of his life was ended.

Yet it was at that moment only commencing, which shows that men can no more interpret the apparently well-ordered events of ordinary existence than the jumbled incoherence of disturbed slumber.

At last Honorine again addressed him, this time with a weak smile, that came through ill-repressed tears as a rainbow in a storm-swept summer sky:

"Do not think me vain or mad," she murmured. "I am sadly happy in my life's work. If I said otherwise it would not be the Queen of France who spoke, but a wretched actress who strove to convince herself in sublime folly. It is the will of Heaven. I am the Queen, and I shall never yield the throne of my fathers."

Her grasp tightened with the concluding phrase, and there came into her eyes an imperious light that went to Jerome's soul.

He bowed and kissed her hand in respectful homage and assent. The act was graceful. It lent gravity to the first words he had uttered since his avowal:

"In order to win you, mademoiselle," he said, "I must first found the Fourth Empire of France."

It was a species of decorous joke, he thought, and Honorine smiled in sympathy with him as she answered:

"Yes, there is no other solution of the difficulty."

He added: "If I were the Emperor of France you would marry me?"

With even greater emphasis she replied "Yes," and this time without any qualification.

Each felt that further conversation on the point was impracticable, and even painful, so after a kindly farewell they separated.

Never before had Vansittart been thwarted in any important design.

As he strolled forth into the bright sunshine of a lovely day in autumn, he tried to laugh at his own absurdity, and planned out a snowshoe expedition after Canadian elk,

As sweet as our MELODY (hear everyone's praise),
As scarce as the cash just before quarter-days.

with Harland as a companion, to fill in the winter months.

But the first winter of pine and prairie were very shadowy and indistinct, whilst there ever recurred to him the vision of the beautiful woman who preferred the sky to the earth, and the fair prospect of love and happiness to the life of a millionaire.

Rather than seek the majestic seclusion of his home, he turned off into Central Park.

His steps wandered aimlessly like his thoughts, and before long he found himself gazing idly at the animals in the Zoological Gardens.

"Here," he said to himself, "the philosopher may find the crude semblance of all the complex passions that shake human nature. One may well wonder which is the happier state. How strange that there should be such development merely because a taller supplies our garments instead of nature."

He looked carefully at the action, and narrowly escaped being caught by a tiger which had, lying blindly, with hideous eyes and open, from the pursuit of another of its species, but in whose path it had fallen.

The incident alarmed a herd of deer, calmly browsing in a neighbouring enclosure. They glanced Vansittart for the noise, and as more the deer and kinds gathered, implicitly trusting, behind the patriarch of the family, a many-antlered stag, who boldly faced the intruder, and was forthwith prepared to offer battle should he cross the fence.

The eyes of the two met in steady challenge, but the deer was the more single-minded. He saw there was not to be a struggle, and resumed his interrupted dinner.

"You are right, my fine warrior," said Vansittart aloud. "It is the man's place to fight, not the woman's."

"Where is the fight, stranger?" came a strong, hearty voice close to him. "Because if there's trouble I'm on. I like to see it. I love it. I go foolin' round lookin' for it, an' I find it every time."

Vansittart wheeled about suddenly, and confronted a splendidly built man, taller even and more powerful than himself, with a bold and handsome face, and honest blue eyes—a stalwart vagrant, whose ragged state argued that in his encounters with trouble his fortunes if not his person had been spared.

The millionaire, in his pre-occupied mood, had not heard his approach, and the two men stood silent for a moment whilst each scanned the points of the other. Approval was unobtrusively mutual.

"Do you tell me that you like a row for the mere sake of it?" said Vansittart, with an amused look.

"That's what I like to do," was the answer. "I was raised about Kansas City, and they've chased me right round the globe. I had a nice little ranch in Texas, an' a whiffling livery house an' cattle into the next location. I built a sawmill on the Red River, an' a place not only took the fixtures out by the roots, but shifted the bed of the river. I struck a mine in South Africa, an' nearly got hanged by the Boers after they had gobbled up the claim. Since then I've changed my occupation. I'm now hunting blizzards."

"You're a curiosity," exclaimed Vansittart.

"Not a bit. But I've got my bagin' things. I'm naturally a peaceable man, but just now I'm agin' things generally."

"Indeed I sympathize with you fully," said the millionaire.

"And I've sort of cottoned on to you, stranger," replied the other. "Now who do you want hiked? You seem a healthy sort of fellow yourself, but I suppose you don't want to soil your clothes. It don't matter about mine. I'm hard up, so we'll call it five dollars for a square lay-out."

Vansittart laughed. "I have no personal animosities," he said, "but let me help you all the same."

He felt for his pocket-book, but the new-comer's face flushed deeply and an angry gleam came into his eyes. "I didn't figure to have trouble with you," he growled, "but I've just seen that I brought from you."

"Nor am I aware that to offer help is to give offence," said Vansittart hotly. "However, you can take your change either in dollars or blows. I can hand on either with ease."

"Draw poker!" shouted the other with delight, as he jammed his fist down upon his head as a preliminary. "But I like you, millioner. Tell me who you are, while you can speak."

Jerome quietly approached him, saying: "While you can listen I will tell you. My name is Vansittart, and when you are respectable again, you can come and see me at my house there. I will then try and give you a fresh start. Meanwhile, you had better get your hands up as I am going to knock you down."

But the stranger backed away from him, not cowed but amazed.

"Say," he gasped, "air you Vansittart, the millionaire?"

"Yes. What of that? I can nevertheless use my fists."

"So you kin, but not on me, if you please. I can't knock up agin' so much ballion. It's a million to a hay seed, and I'm the seed. No, sir. Let me quit and raminate on the queer side of things."

"Come," said Jerome, whose variable mood was now attracted by the man's oddity. "Take something as a loan. Fix yourself up a bit and call upon me to-morrow at three o'clock. I am sure you will be able to repay me. No, I will not be refused. Give me your name so that my servants may readily admit you."

"Jim Bates," said the man, "they generally call me," was the other's slow response whilst he hesitatingly took

what Americans term a "wad" of notes which Vansittart thrust into his hands.

The gentleman from Arizona watched Jerome's retreating figure until it was lost among the trees. He then, with characteristic caution, counted the money. "Ninety dollars," he said at last. "Ninety bloomin' dollars. Three months' solid keep from a man I'd just offered to lick. All right, Mr. Vansittart, sir. You will get 'em back if each dollar draws blood!"

When Jerome reached his home it was time to dress for dinner, but he strode rapidly to Harland's room, and suggested that a simple meal and a bottle of wine might meet their necessities, as he was anxious for a long and undisturbed talk afterwards.

"That will suit us down to the ground, old fellow," said Dick, "particularly as you seem to have something on your chest. I am outer than you think, and I don't like to see you choking after some ballin'-dancer at the opera."

Vansittart laughed at Dick's penetration, and the latter knew the cause of his mirth when he heard Jerome's story later.

The American told his friend the whole of the circumstances, and Dick's eyes became saucer-like in their witness of the dénouement of that afternoon.

"I always said she was a stunner, but I never thought she was an empress," he said reflectively at the close of the recital.

"And yet she is a true woman," mused Vansittart, "tender-hearted and kindly, one who would cling to the man she loved whether he was prince or peasant, had it not been for some dying injunction from a crack-brained father, I suppose."

"Yes," said Dick. "That's it. And it's not fair. It isn't a woman's game to fight for an empire."

Jerome started from his chair and paced the room with hasty strides.

The curious manner in which Harland had echoed his own reflections in the Park had set a mad notion jostling with every reasoning faculty he possessed. For a while his brain was on fire, and when he had calmed down somewhat his face was pale and set in firm resolve.

Stopping in front of Harland he said quietly as he lit a cigar.

"I'll do it."

"Do what?"

"Conquer France!"

"Conquer fiddlesticks," cried the other. "You must be going cracked. Rich as you are you can't buy an army and a fleet big enough for the job."

The millionaire smiled. "I don't want either—yet," he said. "The day has come by since men were able to carve out kingdoms by those means."

"Then what will you do?"

"I will form a company which will be called 'France, Limited,' and I will hold the founder's shares myself!"

CHAPTER IV. MURDER OF WAR.

WHEN Vansittart expressed his intention to turn France into a limited liability company, he was, of course, speaking figuratively.

In plain language he had resolved to pit his brains and his money against a prospective French monarchy, and his sudden declaration to Harland only meant that he had discovered the means rather than the idea, for this had been slowly evolving itself for some hours.

Late into the night they talked. Although the Englishman thought it was his duty to try and dissuade his friend from a quixotic enterprise he soon abandoned the attempt and threw himself heart and soul into the undertaking.

Jerome had the rare faculty of sleeping soundly, no matter how exciting the events of the day might be, so he awoke next morning refreshed and unagitated.

His project was now stronger and clearer in his mind, and he lost no time in taking the first steps towards realising it.

He could not start operations without the sinews of war, so after breakfast he drove to his central estate office to consult with his chief financial agent, Mr. Peter Studevant.

As a rule this old and trusted servant of the family inclined towards conservatism, and some of the operations entered into by his young master had made him gasp by their Napoleonic boldness, but he had long since ceased to advise him on such points.

Every speculation which Vansittart had entered into on a tremendous scale had yielded equally extravagant profits, and the old gentleman felt that Jerome's grasp of principle was vastly more important and potent than the Studevant knowledge of detail.

Still, had the white-haired General Manager of the Vansittart Estate known the nature of the scheme to which Jerome was now committed, he would not have breakfasted so peaceably nor read the Wall Street records so calmly as he approached his office by the Elevated Railroad.

When the millionaire entered Mr. Studevant's room he closed the door and bolted it to avoid interruption.

"Surely not the Grand Trunk again, Mr. Jerome," cried the old gentleman. "You can see further into things than I can, but there surely is no money in that?"

"No," said Vansittart, "not the Grand Trunk. But I want a lot of money, all the same. Now, Mr. Studevant, I want you to give me as careful an approximate estimate as is possible. By using every possible source, and without disturbing the markets too greatly, how much money can I have at immediate call within three weeks?"

Mr. Studevant wrinkled his brows and made some calculations on a blotting-pad. "Twenty-five millions sterling," he answered.

"From your reply, I take it that the money would be lodged mostly in the Banks of England and France?" said Jerome.

"Yes. Any such movement in dollars would depreciate silver."

"And in six months how much?"

More and longer calculation, some thought, and there came the words:—"About one hundred millions sterling, with careful realisations."

"Twelve months later how much?"

"If plans were laid now with any such gigantic object in view, perhaps another hundred millions."

"Two hundred and twenty-five millions of pounds," mused Vansittart. "It staggered France before, but I question if it is enough. Is that all I am worth, Mr. Studevant?"

The older man began to perspire. Some new and terrible scheme had fascinated his master. This time he



was surely mad. "By selling your New York and Chicago estates and mortgaging your property in London," he stammered feebly, "no doubt a further vast sum could be raised, but surely, sir, you are amusing yourself at my expense?"

"No indeed," laughed the other, "the joke will cost me a bit perhaps, but I am quite serious with you."

"May I ask, sir," said the General Manager, with a great effort at regaining his wonted air of dignified composure, "if you really have some definite ideas of committing yourself and your splendid fortune to some tremendous operation which requires all this money?"

"Yes," replied Jerome shortly, too occupied with his own all-absorbing thoughts to notice the saddened emphasis of the question.

"Then, sir," said Mr. Studevant, rising from his chair, and speaking with difficulty, for his voice trembled with emotion, "I will be party to no such lunacy. I have served your grandfather, your father, and yourself for fifty long years, but you must seek some other agent for your great interests. I resign forthwith."

Vansittart now perceived that his faithful adherent was much perturbed. He approached Mr. Studevant, laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said:

"What, old Peter, as I used to call you when I was a little chap, are you the first to desert the ship when she plunges into a gale?"

"But there is no gale, Jerry," whispered the old gentleman. "Things were never better. It is only the captain who is becoming crazy. Why, everything is going wonderfully well. There is a clear gain of thirty millions in that last amalgamation with the Baltimore and Ohio. And your Telegraph Consolidation Scheme brought in fourteen millions. You could set back London, Paris, and Berlin if you chose."

Mr. Studevant paused for want of breath, and a smile on Jerome's face warned him that he was hardly using the best line of argument.

"Come, come, Peter," cried the millionaire. "You shall not condemn me unheard. Sit down. Let us get in some whisky and soda, and cigars, and fairly talk the matter out."

Mr. Studevant afterwards said that it was the spirits, but Jerome held that it was his warm old heart that grew enthusiastic—anyhow, before an hour had passed he was plunged into Vansittart's campaign up to the neck.

He could do no more business that day.

He hurried off to his house and alarmed his daughter when she told him that dinner would be served in ten minutes, by saying cheerfully: "Twenty minutes! Twenty-five millions in ten minutes! It absolutely cannot be done in a second less than ten clear days, and Sunday is a dies non!"

At last he woke up to actualities, and hastened away to dress, murmuring as he went: "One thing I can do, I can save a million or two out of the wreck for him, and he will never know!"

That afternoon, as Vansittart was passing from the dining-room to the library in his house, he heard a fierce altercation in the hall between the footman at the door and some person who appeared to be forcibly demanding admission.

He instantly recognised the voice of his friend from the Central Park, Arizona Jim, but he was too late in hurrying to the rescue to prevent the latter from holding up the terrified servant in the most approved Western manner.

The footman was backing across the hall and up the stairs, with his hands held high above his head, and the cold muzzle of a six-shooter pressed against his forehead, whilst Mr. James Bates was apostrophising him as follows:

"You call me a tramp, you white-headed idiot. You tell me to get out when your boss asks me to come and see him friendly like. If it wasn't that I'm afraid to spoil those rich togs of yours that your master paid for, I wouldn't trouble to rush you with a good honest pistol, but I'd simply hang you until you were sick. You just skip up them stairs and tell him I'm here, or I'll make you strip first, and leather you afterwards."

Vansittart speedily resumed the amazed footman, and puzzled the poor man still more by telling him sharply that he ought to have brought in Mr. Bates's message, without venturing to decide for himself whether or not he should be admitted.

Arizona Jim soon calmed down in the presence of the millionaire.

As firm as a rock, as true as the hand
Of F.A.F. workers, who go hand-in-hand.

He had, it is true, effectively changed for the better in his costume, but he still smacked far too much of the prairies for the quiet respectability of Fifth Avenue.

"I told you this morning," said Vansittart, "that I might be able to do something for you, and, since we met, an opening for your services has presented itself to my mind. Have you any family ties or other distractions that prevent you from devoting yourself absolutely to my orders?"

"Nary a one, boss," was the reply. "Until you gave me that wad this morning, it didn't seem as though there was a darned soul in creation that cared whether I was alive or dead."

"Then," said Vansittart, "are you prepared to accompany me anywhere, to do anything in an honourable sense that I may ask you, and to risk your life, if necessary, in any undertaking in which I risk my own?"

"Governor," said Arizona Jim heartily, "I'm on. What you see, goes. But," he added deprecatingly, "I ain't much of a valet, if that's what you mean."

"Thank you," said Vansittart with a laugh, "I don't expect services of that sort. Strict obedience to orders and a straight punch with the right will be your chief qualifications."

"Bully for me!" roared Mr. Bates, with an air of vast relief. "There ain't a man in New York better qualified for the job than yourself."

"I think," said Vansittart, entering into his humour, "I shall call you 'The Captain of the Guard.'"

"Holy poker!" shouted Arizona Jim, clapping his thigh with increased animation. "That's my billet to a T."

In his first conversation with Mr. Studevant, Jerome had barely outlined the magnificent scheme to which he had intended to devote the whole of his resources, and, if necessary, his life. Many an hour of long and anxious consultation was needed before the financial situation alone became sufficiently clear to permit of other aspects of the project being attended to.

At last it was definitely settled that if no European War or severe financial crisis paralyzed the money-markets of the world during the next eighteen months, there could not be the slightest doubt that Mr. Vansittart was in possession of liquid assets worth at least two hundred and fifty millions sterling.

When the long and tedious calculations necessary to achieve this purpose were ended, Jerome turned himself with renewed ardour to the more exciting actualities of his campaign.

The leading firm of lithographers in New York executed for him a huge chart of Northern Africa, which bore upon its surface not only the latest approved records from European and American geographical institutions, but also collated the information given by all recent travellers through the arid wastes that are traversed alone by the great caravan routes running from Algiers and Morocco to the centre of the Dark Continent.

Armed with this portentous document, the millionaire sought the assistance and advice of his own engineers, who deputed the junior member of their firm, Mr. Walter C. Maclaren, to devote himself wholly to the researches required to be made by Vansittart.

Mr. Maclaren was also commissioned to associate with himself in the enterprise committed to his charge two of the best-known younger members of the engineering profession in London and Paris, and the trio, with several competent assistants and an ample supply of scientific instruments, were to proceed with the utmost possible dispatch to the French colony on the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

What they did there during the winter and early spring months of the following year will be shown in due course.

Another curious preparation made by Vansittart was to give instructions in New York, a city renowned for the excellence of its woodwork, for the practical construction of a huge palace in iron, wood, glass, and papier maché, made in sections which would render it easy of shipment, and yet so designed as to bear when put together a semblance of great strength, durability and beauty.

Special pains were taken that this structure should be completed rapidly. The business house intrusted with its ultimate construction was enjoined to give out the work in many sections to different contractors.

There was no limit of money or expense—only of time and it was a condition precedent to the final signing of the specifications that the entire building should be ready to be loaded on ship-board for transport to and immediate erection in any part of the world, by the following May.

Weeks and even months elapsed whilst Vansittart was planning and perfecting the preliminaries of his gigantic scheme. Not only did he devote attention to what might be termed the purely mechanical side of his venture, but he gave many hours of careful thought to the principles which should regulate his own conduct.

It must not be forgotten that for this inquiry he was already well equipped by reading and reflection. He subjected every phase of the undertaking that presented itself to him to searching and merciless scrutiny by the philosophical light of his earlier studies.

Thus it was that in the exact mapping out of his future actions he accepted propositions which were apparently wildly impracticable, whilst he rejected others which had fair seeming at first glance, but which in their ultimate outcome threatened to depart from the rigid principles he had laid down for his own guidance.

Told in a sentence, he depended upon the sympathies of what may be termed the genuine artisan class, controlled and directed by means of his vast wealth, to achieve the purpose to which he was devoted.

He knew that a power even greater than that of money was the people's will, and he also knew that no man could hope to lead any popular movement unless he succeeded in causing the multitude to believe that his scheme was theirs, and that they governed rather than were subject to the

course of events. This, briefly put, was his philosophy; its application in detail will be made manifest hereafter.

During these busy days he did not often see Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier.

When they met it was rather with the courtesy of a prince and princess in treaty diplomatically for an alliance, than with the unrestrained freedom of young people who thought themselves to be in love with each other.

Of course, before he had taken any definite steps towards the realization of his project, Vansittart had confided it in general terms to the lady in whose monarchical pretensions it had found its birth. She was at first astounded, then alarmed, and finally convinced.

"You are already a king, Mr. Vansittart," she said, "for a crown alone does not make a man worthy to rule. The boldness of your imagination is so closely allied with attention to practical details, that you remind me of no one in history more than Napoleon the Great."

"It is flattering," he said with a smile, "to have you say so, particularly as there may be some little foundation in fact for the hereditary instincts you claim to have discovered in me."

"What," cried Honorine, "have I during all this time been harbouring a rival pretender?"

"Hardly that," he said; "for I fear that my claims would not stand the scrutiny of the Almanach de Gotha. But as a matter of fact there can be no doubt that among my ancestors was Prince Jerome Bonaparte, the cousin of the Emperor, who emigrated to the United States when the Napoleonic dynasty crumbled into ruins after Waterloo. It is surely by some lingering trait of heredity that a free-born American like myself can devote himself so thoroughly to the fortunes of even so fascinating a queen."

Honorine looked at him for a moment in deep thought, and then blushed somewhat as she said: "I hoped there was a cause more recent and more tangible for your devotion, as you term it, than such a far-fetched one as that."

Vansittart started a little at the words. Had he then become so merged in the struggle for Empire that love was wholly out of court? But he was not at a loss for an answer.

"You forget," he said, "that you, yourself, have placed a limit on my words in other directions."



It was now Honorine's turn to be confused. She had unwittingly opened the door for a flirtation, and it was not yet time for tender passages between them.

"I can only say," she replied, "that I commit myself implicitly to your care. I will do what you ask me without question or comment, for I feel deep down in my heart a conviction that you will succeed, and it is not for a weak woman to imagine that she can control or direct a brain like yours."

This gave Vansittart an opportunity to prefer a request he had long contemplated. It was necessary for the development of his undertaking that Mademoiselle Honorine de Montpensier should accompany him to France, and he now explained his desire to her in a few direct words, without the slightest attempt to hint at possible developments in case his plan succeeded. For it was tacitly admitted between them that if Vansittart's mad project were successful, and he really could seize the throne of France, their marriage was a foregone conclusion.

The lady raised no scruples about yielding to his wishes.

"We shall be ready to accompany you," she said, "whenever you are prepared, but I hope you have not forgotten that my presence in Paris might be a serious hindrance to your designs. I am known to the authorities, and would certainly be regarded as a dangerous personage in the royalist interest. Any member of the government might recognise me immediately and order my prompt expulsion from France. Have you considered these features of the case?"

"Fully," replied Vansittart, "and, in my judgment, they constitute a most favourable condition."

"In that case," she said, "my consent is unqualified. Only please give me a few hours to pack."

These words were uttered with a pleasant smile, for she already had some experience of Vansittart's methods, and would not have been surprised if he had proposed to hurry her off without her hat.

At last he decided to cross the Atlantic quietly in his own magnificent yacht, the *Seafarer*. His arrangements were made ostensibly for an extended tour in Europe, and no one outside the chief personages already known to the reader was acquainted in the slightest degree with the fantastic project to which the *Seafarer* was about to bear her master and his companions.

On the evening before the date of their departure—which took place, by-the-way, early in March—Vansittart found Harland awaiting him in their common sanctum, and apparently immersed in a brown study.

"What is the matter, Dick?" said the millionaire cheerily.

"Well, I have been thinking," said Harland.

"The unusual operation seems to have distressed you."

"Don't laugh at me, old chap. Don't you see, to-morrow you will be almost irrevocably committed to this business, and it is such a terrible affair that I cannot help asking myself, what is to be the outcome of it all?"

"To my thinking it will result in my becoming an emperor, and you a duke of some place or another."

"That is all very well," said Dick. "I care as little about being a duke as you do about the other thing. But suppose it all goes wrong, and you lose your life, or get into

gaol, or some such miserable business as that? Have you really allowed for such a possibility?"

"No," replied Vansittart with a laugh. "I may lose my life. That eventuality is always with a man, but I shall not get into gaol, and I shall not be disgraced."

"Then," said Harland, springing to his feet, "I am with you in the deal right through. There is only one thing more, old fellow. During this empire business, am I to call you 'Jerry' or 'Your Majesty'?"

"'Jerry' always," said Vansittart, "and 'Your Majesty' when I am crowned and there are other people about."

"I think I understand," said Harland. "By-the-way, is it at all a part of the scheme that I should flirt with the Comtesse de Fontainebleau?"

"No," laughed Vansittart, "I would not test even your constancy so far."

(To be continued.)

THE CINDER OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF BANK NOTES.

In the repository of the Royal Artillery at Woolwich a large cinder is to be exhibited, which is a very great curiosity, having been produced by the burning of one-pound Bank of England notes when they were called in and cash payments resumed.

The issue of one-pound notes had been for some time previous to their being called in at the rate of one hundred thousand daily.

To burn this immense mass of paper money an oven was constructed, and the process of destruction was carried on, under the direction of officers appointed for the purpose, for thirteen months, the issue of notes to the oven being exactly one hundred and forty-four thousand daily. The cinder of the notes, which is of a purple hue, is inclosed in a glass case.

PROFESSOR SMITH: "No one can conceive of the slow and awful lapse of geological time."

Brown: "I don't know. I've had a carpenter working for me by the day."

BOBBY: "Ma, Clara ain't got any pluck has she?"
Mamma: "I don't know, I am sure. Why do you ask?"

"Because I heard her tell Mr. Brown the other day he'd better not do that again, and he right up and done it. I'll bet you if I told anybody to stop they'd stop."

LAWYER: "Well, proceed."
Witness: "The plaintiff resorted to an ingenious use of circumstantial evidence—"

The Judge (interrupting): "For the benefit of the jury, state in plainer language exactly what you mean by that."

Witness: "Well, my exact meaning is—that he lied."

"Yes," said Colonel Drinker, "I saw poor Bradley about five minutes after the tree fell on him. Now, there was a man cut off in his prime who had everything to make life enjoyable. He had a wife who adored him, the prettiest little boy I ever saw, a pointed dog, and what makes his untimely end more touching, we found in his pocket, untouched, a quart bottle of the finest old Jamaica that any of us ever tasted!"

He (in the conservatory): "Why did you lead me on to a proposal if you intended to refuse me?"

She: "You do me great injustice. What have I done to make you think I loved you?"

He: "In every waltz with other men you kept them almost at arm's length, but when waltzing with me you leaned your head on my shoulder, and let me almost carry you."

She: "That was to keep my feet off the floor, so that you wouldn't step on my toes."

NOTICE.—On account of the Christmas Holidays, the next number of "P.W." will be published on THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24th, instead of on Saturday, December 26th.

COMBINED CYCLING AND FOOTBALL INSURANCE FOR £100.

We undertake to pay ONE HUNDRED POUNDS to whomsoever the Editor of PEARSON'S WEEKLY may decide to be Next-of-kin of any Football Player or Cyclist who meets his death by an accident while actually playing Football or while riding a Cycle, as the case may be. The only condition is that the Football Player or Cyclist in question must at the time of the accident be the possessor of a copy of the current number of PEARSON'S WEEKLY, which must bear his usual signature in ink on the line left blank at the foot of this notice. The copy need not be upon the person at the time of the accident. Notice of accident must be given within three days, and death must have occurred within twenty-four hours of the accident.

Signature

Available until midnight, December 26th, 1896.

As stiff as a poker, as limp as a rag,
As successful as PEARSON'S SIXPENNY MAG.

HOME NOTES.

A PAGE MORE PARTICULARLY FOR LADIES.
Issues will be glad to answer, in this page, questions of general interest upon household matters, so far as space permits. Replies should be marked HOME NOTES.

How to Cook an Old Fowl add a pinch of carbonate of soda to the water to make the bird tender.

Make Lustrous Paint by mixing a small quantity of calcium sulphide with ordinary white paint. (Reply to RUFUS.)

Good Tooth Powder. Two ounces of prepared chalk, half an ounce of powdered orris root, and a quarter of an ounce of carbonate of soda mixed well together and passed twice through a sieve.

The Oil on Linoleum can only be treated as follows, and I fear it will be a slow process. Lay fuller's earth over the stains, and let it stand for twenty-four hours. Take it off, and spread more. This process must be repeated daily, and the rough fuller's earth will be found best. (Reply to LUCAS.)

Ginger Cordial. Procure one pound of brown sugar candy, two ounces of bruised ginger root, and nearly a quart of brandy. First pound the sugar candy very small, and then boil it in a pint of water for a quarter of an hour with the bruised ginger. Remove the ginger root from the syrup, and when all is cold, add the brandy, and bottle for use. (Reply to M. GARRAN.)

To Waterproof Calico. Take three pints of pale linned oil, one ounce of resin of black, and four ounces of white resin. Grind the resin of black with a small quantity of the resin, and then mix it well with the remainder. Gently warm the resin and oil to make them amalgamate well. Lay the composition on the calico with a brush. (Reply to H. J.)

Cheap Puff-Paste for Mince-Pies. Mix half a pound of lard with one tablespoonful of baking powder and the same quantity of salt, beat well together, and then work into a stiff paste with water. Weigh out three ounces of lard, and two ounces of butter, and mix on a board. Spread it with the stiff paste, and fold it three times, i.e., so that it is three times as thick as when open. Flour it well, roll out again and repeat the process, spreading it with lard or butter three times. Lay the paste aside for some time before using—twenty-four hours is not too much—then roll out thin. Bake in a sharp oven.

Make a Brawn as follows: Take a pig's head, feet and tongue which have been previously pickled. Boil them tender with two bay-leaves and a few peppercorns in the water. Remove all the bones. Line the brawn tin with the skin and the skin of the feet and hocks. Out up the rest of the meat, fat and lean together, and with it fill the tin, sprinkling it freely with powdered allspice and pepper. When the tin is full, put on the cover and place heavy weights on the top. Leave it until cold. Take it out of the tin and serve with a napkin folded neatly round it. If the meat be boiled till perfectly tender, I am sure you will have no difficulty in carving it in thin slices. (Reply to V. B. S. Arley.)

Do You Know

A Good Dressmaker?

HOW often do we hear this question, followed by a careful recital about badly-fitting garments, and material cut to waste, etc. It used to be quite rare query of the moment until

DRESSMAKING at HOME

was issued from these offices. Now, with the aid of a good paper pattern and detailed instructions, ladies are making their gowns for themselves from the fascinating designs published on the first of every month, price 1½d. or post-free 2½d. Most of them, in fact, send half-a-crown and so insure a copy of each issue for the year; they are glad for hints to keep their wardrobe up-to-date even if not wanting new garments.

SO SUCCESSFUL HAS THIS PLAN PROVED THAT

FASHIONS for CHILDREN

is usually invested in as well. This saves not only much expense, but taking the children to have their frocks tried on, and it enables one to give a higher price for the materials.

The rate is the same as for the first-named publication but the paper is issued on the 15th of every month.

For the Hands. Partially boil a few medium-sized potatoes, remove the skins and use as you would a piece of soap in washing the hands. This will both whiten and soften the hands.

Take White Spots out of Furniture by holding a shovel of coals over the varnished surface which is spotted. Afterwards, while warm, rub with soft flannel.

Yorkshire Pudding is excellent made thus: Mix a pint of milk with six ounces of flour and two eggs. If four ounces of suet be added to the mixture, a good baking pudding is obtained. (Reply to WOODBINE.)

Make Camphor Ball. This preparation is very useful for chapped hands, and should certainly be in readiness by now. Melt together two ounces of lard, two ounces of white wax and half an ounce of powdered camphor.

Mulled Beer. Place a pint of strong ale in a clean saucepan with half a wine-glassful of whisky. Stir it over the fire till it creams, flavouring it at the same time with sugar, ginger and nutmeg. Add a little cold ale to bring it to the right temperature for drinking, and serve.

To Brighten Picture Frames. Give a golden tinge to one pint of water by adding a little sulphur. Then put it into a saucepan with four ounces of garlic bruised. Let it boil for ten minutes, remove it from the fire, strain the liquid off, and when cold wash the gilding with a soft painter's brush. This will greatly improve its appearance. (Reply to BISHOP.)

"Maids of Honour." Boil half a pint of milk gently for a quarter of an hour with two tablespoonfuls of fine bread-crumbs, two ounces of butter, a little lemon-peel, and loaf sugar to taste. Then add three well-beaten eggs, and stir until the mixture becomes quite thick. Strain through a sieve. Line a dish, or several patty-pans, with puff paste, half fill with the mixture and bake. (Reply to DONA.)

My Bottled Blacking Recipe is once more in demand. Put half a pound of gum shellac into a quart bottle, cover it with alcohol; cork it tightly and keep it in a warm place. Shake the bottle several times a day, and after three days add a piece of camphor the size of a hen's egg, shake it well, and in four hours stir in one ounce of lamp-black. If the alcohol be good all will be dissolved in three days. Should the mixture be too thick, add more alcohol. Pour a little into a cup and apply with a camel-hair brush. The boots should be brushed clean before applying this mixture.

Salsify is a winter vegetable, so you will be able to procure it at once. I think you must have met with it before, perhaps under the name of the "vegetable oyster." Salsify, like artichokes, requires careful preparation, or it will turn a blackish colour in cooking. The roots should be nicely scraped, and as each one is done it should be thrown into the water, to which a little lemon-juice or vinegar has been added. When cooking, add two tablespoonfuls of lemon-juice or vinegar to each half gallon of water. Place the vegetable in boiling water, and you will find that it requires about an hour's boiling before it is tender. Drain well and serve with melted butter. This vegetable can be made up after the manner of fish-cakes or scallops, and then fried in boiling fat. A little anchovy sauce is an improvement to it when it is served as a separate dish. (Reply to WOODBINE.)

That you have a Cold is not a Matter

for Wonderment, Kitty, when I note your statement that you never wear a dressing-jacket. What could be more unwise than to stand for perhaps half-an-hour but partially robed in a fireless room? "I always get up so late," you confess, with charming candour, "that I cannot bother to take a jacket on and off." Let us see then if we cannot compromise matters. Surely there is no objection to your wearing a dressing-cape of flannel or flannel-ette, the time taken to don and doff it being far less than when a jacket is worn. In the margin I have made a little sketch for you of a very useful pattern (No. 2071) to be had from this office for 6½d. post-free. I cannot conceive anything which will better suit your requirements, in every respect, for there is very little work in it. (Reply to KITTY VERNON, Eccles.)



Children's Cashmere Capes may be cleaned by rubbing with warmed flour, which should be set in the oven and stirred occasionally till hot through, but not browned. Rub in the flour with a piece of new flannel. (Reply to MARIO.)

Whiten your Piano Notes by this method. Take some finely-powdered whiting and apply it with a damp cloth, then polish with a dry one. Let the lid remain open and exposed to the sun and air as much as possible. Rub the spots with lemon-juice before applying the whiting. (Reply to E. NASH.)

Renovating Leather Chairs. Wipe the chair cushions with a slightly damp cloth to cleanse them, then rub dry. Beat the white of an egg to a stiff froth and apply it quickly to the leather with a soft rag. This process will do a great deal to brighten your furniture and nourish the leather. (Reply to M. M., North Ormsby.)

To Clean Engravings. Lay the picture on a perfectly smooth board. Dissolve some finely powdered salt with lemon-juice. Cover the picture with it. Pour boiling water over the print to cleanse it, and place it in a shady spot in the open air to dry. Do not dry the picture in the sun, or before the fire, or it may acquire a yellow tinge. (Reply to A READER.)

Washing and Colouring Lace Curtains.

Wash these carefully as you would any other lace. Rinse them in several waters to make them clear. To tint them cream, procure a pennyworth of saffron from a chemist; put it into a cup and pour over it a small quantity of boiling water. Add sufficient of this colouring to the last rinsing water to make the curtains just the right shade, not forgetting that they will dry lighter. While still wet, stiffen them with starch, also slightly tinted with saffron, and rub it in well. Then lay a pair of clean sheets on to the floor and pin the curtains on to them, keeping the edges very straight. Put the pins in about two inches apart all round the edge, and, as the lace dries, pull out the spaces between the pins to prevent the edges becoming a series of points. If the door and window of the room are left open, the curtains will soon dry. Lace curtains treated thus look much better than if ironed.

German Tart. Six ounces of flour, two ounces of butter, one yolk of egg, half a pound of prunes, one pound of apples, one teaspoonful of mixed spice, a quarter of a pound of sugar, and half a pint of water. Place in a basin the flour, butter, and one ounce of sugar. Rub all well together with the fingers, and drop in the yolk of egg; moisten it with a little cold water. Turn the dough out on a board and knead it lightly together. Cut it in two pieces. With one half line a flat dish, and place in the apples and prunes prepared in the following manner: Boil the remainder of the sugar and water together, add the prunes, and cook slowly till almost tender, then pare, core, and slice the apples, add them, and continue to cook till the apples are nearly tender. When the flat dish has been filled, roll out the remainder of the crust and cover the dish with it. Bake in a moderate oven for half-an-hour. Brush over with white of egg and dust with sugar, then return it to the oven for one minute longer to dry the white of egg.

Isobel

*. Advertisements can only be received up to December 31 at the following rates: Commencing January, 1897, a new scale will come into force based upon £120 per insertion for front page, £100 per page facing matter, 25 per inch single column.

ADVERTISEMENT SCALE.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£1 10 0
Double	3 0 0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	70 0 0
Half page	35 0 0
Quarter page	17 10 0
Eighth page	8 10 0
Tenth page	7 0 0
Front page, whole	90 0 0
half	45 0 0
quarter	22 10 0
eighth	11 5 0

All spaces above one-tenth of a page are charged at per page rate.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, Dec. 22, if intended for the issue on sale Jan. 2, and dated Jan. 9. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Office, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

1896. OCT.	NOVEMBER.	DECEMBER.	1897. JAN.	FEBRUARY.	MARCH.	APRIL.	MAY.	JUNE.	JULY.	AUGUST.	SEPTEMBER.
M 4 11 18 21 T 1 10 19 22 W 2 12 20 23 T 3 14 21 24 F 5 16 23 26 S 6 17 24 31	M 1 8 15 22 29 T 2 9 16 23 30 W 3 10 17 24 31 T 4 11 18 25 F 5 12 19 26 31 S 7 14 21 28	M 5 12 19 26 31 T 6 13 20 27 W 7 14 21 28 31 T 8 15 22 29 F 9 16 23 30 S 10 17 24 31	M 3 10 17 24 31 T 4 11 18 25 W 5 12 19 26 31 T 6 13 20 27 F 7 14 21 28 S 8 15 22 29	M 1 8 15 22 29 T 2 9 16 23 30 W 3 10 17 24 31 T 4 11 18 25 F 5 12 19 26 31 S 6 13 20 27	M 7 14 21 28 T 8 15 22 29 W 9 16 23 30 T 10 17 24 31 F 11 18 25 S 12 19 26 31	M 4 11 18 25 T 5 12 19 26 31 W 6 13 20 27 T 7 14 21 28 F 8 15 22 29 S 9 16 23 30	M 2 9 16 23 30 T 3 10 17 24 31 W 4 11 18 25 T 5 12 19 26 31 F 6 13 20 27 S 7 14 21 28	M 6 13 20 27 T 7 14 21 28 31 W 8 15 22 29 T 9 16 23 30 F 10 17 24 31 S 11 18 25	M 1 8 15 22 29 T 2 9 16 23 30 W 3 10 17 24 31 T 4 11 18 25 F 5 12 19 26 31 S 6 13 20 27	M 5 12 19 26 31 T 6 13 20 27 W 7 14 21 28 31 T 8 15 22 29 F 9 16 23 30 S 10 17 24 31	M 3 10 17 24 31 T 4 11 18 25 W 5 12 19 26 31 T 6 13 20 27 F 7 14 21 28 S 8 15 22 29

THE MOST ECONOMIC, CONVENIENT,
& PORTABLE FORM OF SOUP.

LAZENBY'S SOUP SQUARES

(MULLIGATAWNY, GRAVY, JULIENNE, ETC.)

FOR MAKING FRESH SOUP, OR
IMPROVING HOME MADE STOCK,
EACH SQUARE WILL PRODUCE

1 1/2 PINTS
OF STRONG
NUTRITIOUS SOUP

Prepared by
E. LAZENBY & SON, LTD 18 Trinity St. LONDON, S.E.

YORKSHIRE RELISH

THE BEST
AND
CHEAPEST

SAUCE IN THE WORLD.

A teaspoonful in your basin of Soup is a marvellous improvement,
and with your Chop and Steak it is simply delicious.

SOLD IN BOTTLES, 6d., 1/- & 2/- EACH.

Proprietors: **GOODALL, BACKHOUSE & Co., LEEDS.**

Quaker Oats
Stands Alone

ANGLO-BAVARIAN PRIZE MEDAL ALES AND STOUT.



BREWERY—SHEPTON MALL, ST.
AGENCIES THROUGHOUT ENGLAND.

ALL SKIN DISEASES

such as Eczema, Psoriasis, Sores,
Chilblains, Burns, Irritation, are
POSITIVELY CURED
by the use of a soothing, healing
remedy called ANTEKEMA. Write,
naming this paper, to Antekema
Co., 83, Castle Road, London, N.W.
for a trial sample and test it
FREE OF CHARGE.

INVENTORS.

Inventions Patented in all Countries. Patents
Bought, Sold, or Financed; Companies
formed. Handbook, "How to Patent an
Invention," Information, and advice free.

HUGHES & YOUNG,
Patent Agents. (Est'd. 1839.)
25, COLEMAN STREET, LONDON,
AND 14, ST. MARK'S SQUARE, MANCHESTER.



THE NEW PATENT SOUND DISCS

Completely cures DEAF-
NESS and HEAD PAINS, no
matter of how long stand-
ing. Are the same to the
ears as glasses are to the
eyes. Invaluable. Comfort-
able. Worn without without
any restriction. Examinations
free. The
S.E. WALKER CO., 63 & 65, New Bond St., London, W.

DON'T CUT YOUR CORNS.

The more you cut them the larger
they grow.

SCOTT'S HERBAL PLASTER

For Corns, Bunions, Blisters,
and all kinds of skin diseases.
It is the only plaster that
cures them. Go to any
60, BRIDGE STREET, BOLTON.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

An Improvement in
Lamp Wicks.

* Stemp's Patent Wicks prevent Lamp
Explosions; require no Trimming; burn
a pure white, refracting Light; and emit
neither Smoke nor Soot. They break
no Chimney Glasses and save much
trouble and expense. Two Stamps for
Sample and full particulars. Stove and
large central draught Wicks, Five Stamps.
C. S. Stemp & Co., 12, Buckingham
Palace Road, London.
* Agents wanted everywhere.
Name this Paper when writing.

HERBULINE.

FREE In proof of the merits of Herbuline all
sufferers from Neuralgia, Tio, and Tooth-
ache are cured on the spot and in the
time named on calling at our office. Address below.
We hold a letter of thanks from the Magistrate
of the City of Glasgow for curing sufferers during
the hard winter two years ago. Over 350 cured on
the spot.

ALL OTHER REMEDIES PALE BEFORE

THIS SCOTCH WONDER-WORKER.

NEURALGIA & TIO cured in 30 Minutes.
TOOTHACHE - 10 Seconds.
RHEUMATISM - 24 Hours.
HERBULINE is free from Acids or Poisons, and is
used externally. Directions with each bottle.

FOR nine years we have given these free test-cures.
Over 10,000 have been treated successfully.

"Herbuline is a household word, its properties being
really as marvellous as its discoverers claim for it."
Glasgow Evening News, 15/11/91.
Sold by Chemists and Stores at 1/4 per bottle, if
posted 3d. extra. STOCKED by all the first Whole-
sale and Retail houses in the Kingdom.—HERBULINE
MANUFACTURING CO., 67, Market St., GLASGOW

MOIR'S PURE JAMS

Awarded
21 Gold
Medals.

JOHN MOIR & SON LIMITED.
LONDON, ABERDEEN, AND SEVILLE.
Read Office: 105, LEADENHALL ST., E.C.

I CURE FITS

And to prove it I will GIVE you a bottle
of my remedy for nothing, so that you
may try it before paying out any money.
I have made a life-long study of Fits, Epilepsy,
St. Vitus' Dance, &c., and when I
saw cure I mean a radical cure. Don't
CONTINUE TO SUFFER, but send for
testimonials and FREE bottle of Medi-
cine and try it. H. G. ROOT, 25,
Beddington Gardens, LONDON, N.W.

THE WHITELY EXERCISER



It is the most
simple, practical,
and complete
device in the
world for scien-
tific physical
training at home
or while travel-
ling. Its capacity
for diversity of
movement is mar-
vellous—with it
you may make not
only the move-
ments usually
performed with
rowing machines,
pulley weights,
dumb-bells, etc.,
but also rapid exercise, such as boxing, fencing,
and the shot—movements impossible on
other machines. Adjustable resistance to 100 lb. No
weights. Pulleys noiseless. Weighs 200s. Can be
carried in pocket, and put up in a moment on door
or window frame without tool of any kind, and used
instantly. Attachment for leg movements. Special
attachment for correcting round shoulders. Illustrated
charts, instructor, oil-bottle, and all conveniences
for immediate use. Circular free; but better send
price, receive machine, give it a trial, and if not
satisfactory money will be refunded on return of
machine by hand or post.
PRICES: Ladies' and Children's, 10/-; Men's
Medium, 12/6; Men's Heavy, 15/-, carriage paid.
All Machines Warranted for Two Years.
THE WHITELY EXERCISER LTD., 6
Dept. 20, 21, LAURENCE POUNDAGE LANE,
GAMAGE ST., LONDON, E.C. Superb Demon-
strator always in attendance at GAMAGE'S,
The Athlete's Provider, 125-126, Holborn, E.C.

SULPHOLINE LOTION,

For clearing the skin from spots,
blemishes, redness, roughness, giving
a beautiful complexion and pleasing
appearance.
SHILLING BOTTLES.

Notice.

Persons subject to eye disorders
should know that any affliction can
be cured by Singleton's Golden
Eye Ointment, but it must be
Singleton's. Of all chemists and
drug stores at 2/- per pot. 300
years' reputation. "How to
preserve the Eyesight," a little
book of value to every family in
which there is a case of weak eyes,
will be forwarded free to any
address by Stephen Green,
22, Lambeth Road,
London.

Sample Jar,
post free,
7½d. and 1/3.
**PLUMTREE,
SOUTHPORT.**



**Delicate in
Flavour,
Superior in
Quality.**

Sold every-
where in
6d. and 1s.
Jars.

**For
Breakfast,
Luncheon,
and Tea.**

THE "DOLLY" SPECIALITIES.

"DOLLY" Blue.

NOTICE.—"Dolly" Blue is neatly tied in a white bag to a
small handle to hold by whilst using. It is the cheapest
Blue in the market. "Dolly" Blue is sold by all grocers
and oilmen at 1d. a Bag.

"DOLLY" Cream and Tints.

"Dolly" Cream Colour for Tinting Curtains, Mualins,
Laces, Silks, Blouses, &c., a Rich Cream Shade.
"Dolly" Tints manufactured in 6 Shades—Pink, Terra-
Cotta, Old Gold, Heliotrope, Sea Green, and Canary Yellow,
for Tinting faded Ribbons, Laces, &c.
Their respective Shades sold everywhere, 1d. per Bag.
Will wash out when required.

"DOLLY" Fast Dyes.

The "Dolly" Dyes are fast on Wool and Cotton alike,
and will not wash out or fade. "Dolly" Dyes are not tints,
but are solid colours, viz., Black, Brown, Blue, Green, Red,
and Maroon.

PRICE 24. EACH DYE. "Dolly" Dyes for Home Dyeing are sold by all
Grocers and Oilmen. The "Dolly" Specialities are manufactured only by
WM. EDGE & SONS Limited, BOLTON, LANCs.

THE SPINSTER FOILED.
This Christmas Eve, we are alone;
She cannot get to know
She stands a moment waiting,
Beneath the mistletoe.

As I have said, we are alone,
The house is dark and low;
The Christmas Eve is still,
And the mistletoe hangs so low.

Alas! how often I have known
A spinster standing there,
Waiting for a lover's kiss,
Beneath the mistletoe.

THE ONLY KNOWN EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE is the case of a hen sitting on a china egg.

THEY WERE TALKING ON DAVIS.

He stepped on a piece of orange peel, fell, and was
prevented from giving a street performance and causing an
accident.

HUMAN NATURE.—The Next-door Neighbour: "Just
finished painting your fence, eh? Why don't you put
a sign on it to warn people?"

He answered: "I did, every passer-by
would want to see it, and it spoke the truth. It'll
have a chance to dry now."

A HIGH-BREDED INSTITUTION.—Mrs. Rusholme
(of Lonsdale Street): "I'm so glad that the village
committee decided to have a regular uniformed police
force, like the city."

Mr. Rusholme: "Quite an unnecessary thing, my
dear, in a quiet rural place like this."

Mrs. Rusholme: "Have you say so, George? You
know how impossible it is now to get a cook to stay
with us!"

Mrs. Rusholme's mother took him to her lap to impress
upon him the duty of obeying his parents and being
kind to his little brother.

When hearing these words, Matthew gazed at
her with a look of earnestness, and felt that a deep
impression had been made upon his young mind.

He then finished the evening lesson was
disappeared by his remarking dryly: "Your chin goes
up and down so funny all the time you're talkin'."

A BOY'S conscience is that part of him which prompts
him to eat all the sweets to keep them from making his
little brother ill.

WOULD BE CONSIDERATE HOSTESS (to son of the
house): "How inattentive you are, John. You really
must look after Mr. Brown. He's helping himself to
everything."

(Discomfiture of Brown, who, if somewhat shy, is
conscious of a very healthy appetite.)

PERLEY: "Hullo, Jinx! Going to take Christmas
quietly?"

Jinx: "No. Going to devote it to athletics."

Perley: "Good. What kind? Golf or football?"

Jinx: "Neither. I am going to carve a turkey I
raised myself, for ten people. There's exercise for
you!"

UNCLE: "What are you crying for, Georgie?"

Georgie: "Teacher caned me because I was the only
one—boo-hoo—able to answer a question to-day."

Uncle (indignantly): "This is scandalous, my poor
boy! What was the question?"

George (between sobs): "Who put the bent pin in
teacher's chair?"

"BOIL it down," is a very good newspaper maxim, but
even a newspaper maxim needs to be obeyed with
discretion.

Not long ago a theatrical manager wrote the following
couplet as an advertisement of his comedy:

From half-past eight till half-past ten
You laugh and laugh and laugh again.

Imagine his surprise when a matter-of-fact compositor
set up the advertisement, and it appeared:

From 8.30 to 10.30.
You laugh and laugh and laugh again.

A FEMININE TALKER.—Small Boy: "Mom wants a
loaf of stale bread ter make stuffin' with for our
Christmas turkey."

Baker: "We have no stale bread left."

"No bread?"

"Nothing but fresh bread."

"Gimme a loaf."

"But you said your mother desired stale bread."

"Yes."

"This isn't stale."

"Mom's run accrost th' street to talk with the
neighbours 'bout th' goings on at Mrs. Blinker's last
night, an' it'll be stale by the time she gets back."

TO NEW READERS—GREETING!

AMONG the readers of this Double Number of P.W.
there may be a few who do not know what the ordinary
issue of the paper is like.

Let me therefore tell them that the copy
they hold in their hands is vastly different
in get-up to the regular weekly number. It
contains none of the special features which has
made P.W. so popular, and is filled mostly with
seasonable matter.

To begin with, the fourth page is, in the ordinary way,
filled with Questions and Replies of unusual interest,
for which readers are paid at liberal rates; "THE
MISTAKES WE MAKE" is a series of startling denials
of popularly accepted historical truths; "PEOPLE OF
IMPORTANCE" speaks for itself; "NEW AND STRANGE"
consists of short, concise descriptions of the latest
inventions and discoveries; then there is a page of
replies to correspondents, besides "FOOTBALL NOTES"
and "ARMY NOTES."

Next week P.W. will resume its familiar appearance,
and will include all these features. If you will take the
trouble to read a copy, I feel sure that you will become
a regular purchaser.

POSTAL RATES.

Name of Publication.	One Year	Half Year	3 Months
Pearson's Weekly.....	5. 8	3. 4	2. 2
Home Notes	8. 8	4. 4	2. 2
Short Stories	6. 6	3. 3	1. 8
Isobel's Home Cookery	6. 6	3. 3	1. 8
Pearson's Magazine	9. 0	4. 6	2. 3
Melody	9. 0	4. 6	2. 3
Isobel's Dressmaking at Home	2. 6	—	—
Isobel's Fashions for Children	2. 6	—	—

ALL POST FREE.

Offices: Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Register & Telegraphic Address—

"HUMOURSOME, LONDON."

Messrs. R. A. THOMPSON & Co. are our Sole Agents in Sydney
(180, Pitt Street), Melbourne (363, Little Collins Street), Brisbane
(Edward Street), Adelaide (7, King William Street), Montreal (4, Beaver
Hall Mill), and Cape Town (38, Loop Street).

P.W. can be obtained in Paris at Neal's Library, 248, Rue Rivoli, and
at the principal kiosks.

Printed and Published by J. ARTHUR PEARSON LTD., at Pearson's
Weekly Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Choice and Seasonable Presents.



DELICIOUS
MAZAWATTEE
TEAS

Xmas. Rose Boxes

& Presentation Tins.

Delicious
Mazawattee Teas
can be obtained
from
Leading Family Grocers
everywhere.

For the Xmas and New Year Season, these Delicious
Teas can be obtained packed in highly-artistic Christmas
Rose Boxes, each containing 3lbs. of Mazawattee; or in
specially-designed and handsomely-decorated 1lb., 3lb, 6lb.,
and 10lb. Tins, any one of which forms an exceedingly

Choice, Acceptable and Useful Present.

"PEARSON'S."



A.—The Editors' Building. B.—Surgery. C.—Art Department. D.—Composing and Printing Halls. K.—Ironclad Building for Proof-readers. M.—Lunatic Asylum. N.—Storehouse for Jokes. P.—Publishing Offices. S.—Our Private Graveyard.

THE new Pearson Buildings are to be found, as all the world knows, in Covent Garden. From the windows of the Editors' rooms can be seen the wide expanse of beautiful flowerbeds, velvety lawns, and groves of stately trees, that have made Covent Garden the Garden of England. 'Tis here in this lovely, sequestered spot, where the leather-lunged milkman troubleth not, that we labour, and labour cannot but be sweet amidst such surroundings; from here we turn out those colossal products of our brains that delight the whole English-speaking world.

Entering the building by the door marked "P," and passing the Twelfth Assistant Boy who guards its portals, the visitor enters the Publishing Offices (see next page), where subscriptions are received, and inquiries relating to the different departments are answered. This is perhaps the most interesting part of the building. Apart from the fact that the Head Cashier can, from long practice, accept a year's subscription with a smile it is worth thirteen shillings to see, it has an attractive interest found nowhere else.

It will be noticed that this office is ornamented with several persons suspended from the ceiling. These are men who merely called to say they sent in solutions of prize puzzles and did not receive the prize, and that in their opinion, and in the opinion of their friends, nobody but a sister or a cousin or an aunt of some one of the editors is ever permitted to receive a prize. These men dry quickly in the warm air of the office, and the health officials have decided that there is no objection, on sanitary grounds, to permitting them to remain in the office for almost any period. As a matter of fact, however, they are taken down once a month, and renewed with a fresh set. We lose subscribers, of course, this way, but we cannot have the general health of a sensitive staff imperilled by a few grumblers. But it really makes no difference, for if it looks as though a copy of any of our publications was likely to remain unsold we invite the first distinguished foreigner who visits our shores



A portion of the Torture Chamber.

to sup with the Fighting Editor, who enlarges politely but firmly upon the advantages of a knowledge of English and the benefits to be derived from reading our papers. The distinguished foreigner invariably subscribes, which shows that no reliance can be placed in the statement that the people of other nations view the power of the English Press with contempt.

The gentleman in the foreground who is on the point of withdrawing hurriedly, is a reader from the Fatherland, who came in to explain that if any more allusions were made to a certain Imperial telegram someone would get hurt. Previously enrolling himself a life



Advertising Manager's Office.

subscriber to the whole of our papers, he is now on his way home.

The two chairs in the extreme right-hand corner are for the accommodation of callers who insist upon seeing the Editor-in-chief, but who decline to state the nature of their business. These chairs are connected with an electric dynamo, which gives forth a current of tremendous power. They have been used, on an average, twice a day during the last six months, and have done an immense amount of good. The placard in regard to Mother-in-law jokes lures a constant succession of callers into the basement, in which is situated what is commonly known in the establishment as the "Torture Chamber."

At present Spring poets, persons who bring jokes on mothers-in-law, and those who call to advise the editors how to conduct their various publications, are taken to the Torture Chamber, and quietly and humanely beheaded.

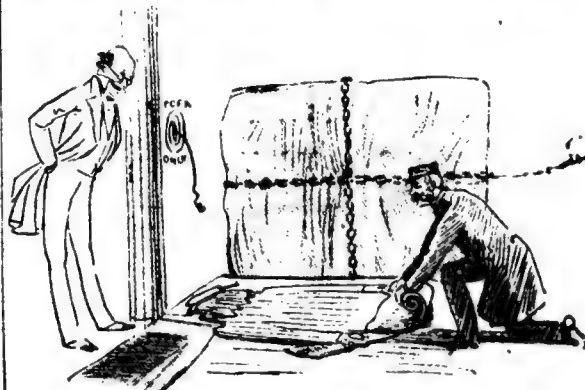
Lady authoresses under the age of twenty-three can generally reckon upon obtaining a personal interview with the Editor-in-chief, who serves them with tea and biscuits in a secluded arbour, but over that age they are passed on to various subs., the newest and youngest sub. receiving the most elderly. Time is money, and this system also has the advantage of making the young sub-editors eager for promotion.

Of course, Pearson's Establishment buries its own dead. A charming little cemetery, marked "S"

in the illustration, contains the bodies of those who have ceased to call at Pearson's. The London County Council made a grant of this plot of ground, which was formerly used as a Kindergarten by the juvenile frequenters of Covent Garden, and Pearson's official undertaker furnishes at the expense of the establishment quiet funerals and neat and uniform headstones. To a man of taste it must be a real pleasure to be buried in this beautiful little cemetery, and our readers will be glad to know that we are now making arrangements to increase fully 50 per cent. our annual output of corpses. Well-equipped hearses leave the front door every half hour.

The entire detached building marked "A" is occupied by the editors of the various Pearson publications. The Art Department has its home in the building marked "C," and the Publication Department in the building marked "P." The Mechanical Department, including the composing rooms and the printing presses, is situated in the building marked "D," and the Proof-Reader resides in a small but immensely strong edifice marked "K." So many proof-readers have perished suddenly after brief interviews with contributors who claimed that they had found errors in their articles as printed, that it was resolved to place the present Proof-Reader in a position of safety. Nothing short of a regular siege with the largest Krupp guns can drag him from his retreat, and it is thought that his chances for long life are now but little below the average.

The Art Department is the happy home of some seven hundred artists who draw daily on their imaginations. Persons who call with alleged humorous sketches, and who remark that they cannot draw, but



The poet after the trap gets in its work.

As blithe as an editor (?) with nothing to trouble you.
As fresh, bright, and up-to-date as genial P. W.

have brought a few ideas for our artists to work up, are handed over to the Head Boy of the Art Department, who gives each one a bottle of water and a loaf of bread, and starts him along the corridor with instructions to keep on until he comes to a door on which is painted "Humorous Sketches." None of these ingenious persons who have thus been sent on their way have ever returned. Their fate is plunged in a mystery as dark and undecipherable as the humour of their sketches.



The Curious Man.

The Mechanical Department is able to make the proud and unique boast that it does not possess a single "Intelligent Composer." We take pride in saying that the "Intelligent Composer" who corrects every article which he sets, and knows how it should have been written much better than the author himself, cannot live in Pearson's Building. Our compositions invariably "follow copy," no matter whether the author is right or wrong.

"H" is the Surgery. As will be readily understood, a large number of persons are daily killed, and a much larger number daily wounded, in the terrible crush of men and women who force their way into the Publishing Office in order to subscribe to Pearson's publications. The wounded are taken to the surgery, where they are carefully repaired by a staff of eminent surgeons, and are returned to their friends completely renovated, free of charge.

A comfortable Asylum, marked "M" is designed for those persons who have been driven mad by efforts to solve the picture puzzles in the Christmas Numbers of Pearson's Weekly. They are quiet and inoffensive inmates, and they spend their time in cutting portraits of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Rosebery, and Sir William Harcourt into small squares, and then putting them together in the hope of making a portrait of the next leader of the Liberal Party. Up to the 1st of November of this year there were 174 persons in this Asylum, but it is confidently anticipated that the number will be at least doubled now that another Christmas Number is in the hands of the public. The taxpayer may rest assured that no pains will be spared to make our inmates as happy and as useful as if they were professional reformers.

At "N" is situated the storeroom for jokes that have once been used in any of the Pearson publications. These jokes are carefully put up in hermetically sealed tins, and at the expiration of five years are sold by

auction. The demand for them is always very brisk, as the leading humorous papers depend upon them as the chief means of filling their columns; 2011 tins of preserved jokes were sold at our last auction, and at the present writing the storeroom is already so full of tins that an additional storeroom will have to be found before the time of the next auction arrives.

The Home Notes department occupies a wing to the rear of the Establishment. Our lady assistants are all beautiful and wealthy, and work for us simply with a view to filling up the time which once hung so heavily upon their hands when they ruled in the salons of fashionable society.

As most of the persons employed in the Building prefer to live in beautiful country houses at some distance from the Metropolis, it was for some time found to be difficult to enforce the rules which require punctual attendance at the Building at the same hour every



The Pearson Ship Railway.

morning. When a compositor has to drive in his carriage, say, two miles, from his house to the railway station, then to travel twenty or thirty miles by train, and then to cross the river, or, perhaps, the Channel, or the Strand when it is "up," he cannot be sure of arriving at his post at the precise hour at which he ought to arrive.

We, therefore, invited our entire army of workers to remove to a beautiful model village which we had built on one of the Channel Islands, where pure air and every imaginable luxury are at their command. An immense steamer, constructed, as the illustration shows, to run both on sea and land, leaves the Pearson

Buildings every afternoon after office hours, and transports the residents of our model village to their quiet homes.

The next morning the steamer brings them back to Covent Garden, arriving at precisely nine o'clock. This plan, simple as it may seem, has been immensely successful, and Brightest England, as our model village is called, is the most beautiful, as well as the healthiest, and most moral village in the whole Empire.

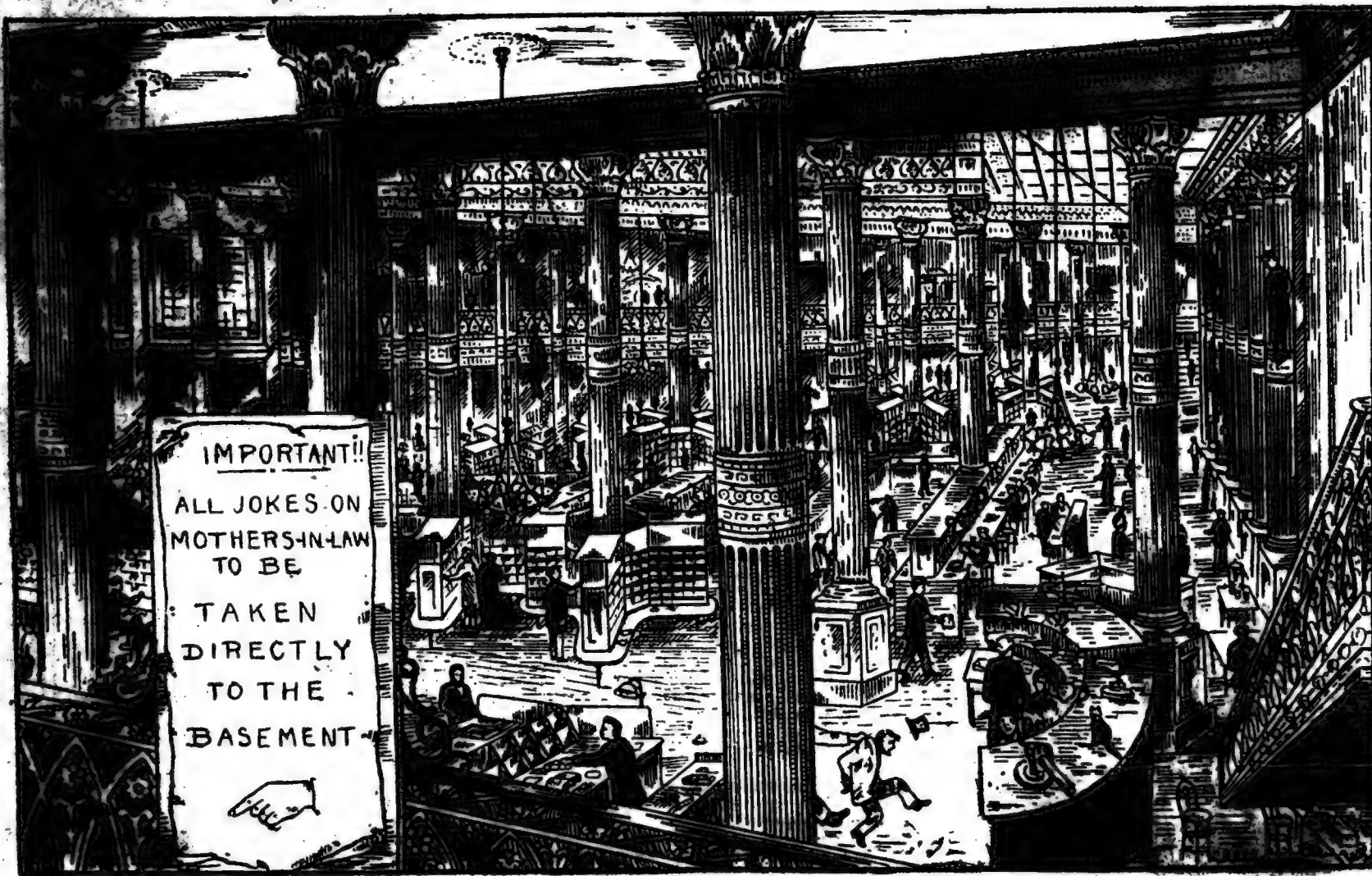
The Advertising Manager's office, as will be seen from an illustration on the previous page, is one erected at great expense, and with due regard to the important position this gentleman fills. It is modelled after a well-known castle on the Rhine, and advertisers in our various publications can only obtain admission to him during certain hours of the day when the drawbridge is down.

It is our intention during the Spring of next year to bring out several new publications. For these we shall want new premises, and shall be compelled to tear down and re-erect on three or four of the immediately surrounding parishes. It may happen, indeed, before the dawn of the next century that our business will so extend that an Act of Parliament will have to be passed changing the name of London into Pearson's.

Were it not for the well-known modesty that prevails throughout our establishment, some account might be included here of the various personal attributes peculiar to our staff. To make a general statement, however, it may be taken for granted that they are a fine body of men. They are affectionate sons, attentive brothers, reliable husbands, and benevolent uncles. They always go home to tea, never spank the baby, never part their hair in the middle, or ride their bicycles in crowded cities; never grumble at cold mutton on washdays, never steal umbrellas, and pay their taxes beforehand. They do not collect stamps or autographs, never shriek for an encore when they go to the theatre on a free pass, nor do they go to the funeral of a grandmother on the day on which there is a big football match. Only one man was ever dismissed from the staff, so perfect are the powers of editorial selection. He was sent away because he attended the funeral of his mother-in-law in a red tie and one of those new double-stand-up collars.



Pin-hole View of the Fighting Editor.

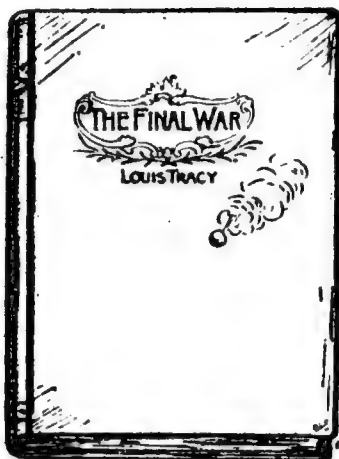


A Section of the Publishing Office.

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE comes with a wealth of attractive reading in stories and articles, grave and gay, with illustrations by Harry Furniss, J. F. Sullivan, and many others; and stories by Rudyard Kipling, Frankfort Moore, and W. L. Alden, to mention only three out of a multitude.—Daily Graphic.

A PAGE OF PRIZES.

These prizes are for the readers of "SHORT STORIES." Fuller particulars will be found in the Xmas Number of that paper published on Tuesday next. We have printed this page here, thinking some of the readers of "P.W." might be disappointed if they were not also given an opportunity of competing. No competitions will be received for any of the undermentioned prizes unless competitors comply with the regulations published in "SHORT STORIES," the Twopenny Double Number of which consists of sixty-four pages and contains the opening chapters of a thrilling story by Mr. Allen Upward, whose "Secrets of the Courts of Europe" have been so popular in "PEARSON'S MAGAZINE."



Twelve copies of this book will be given to the twelve persons who most cleverly answer a simple sum in arithmetic.



Twelve copies of this work will be given to the twelve persons who make the cleverest anagrams on the words: "GUILTY GOLD BY HEADON HILL."



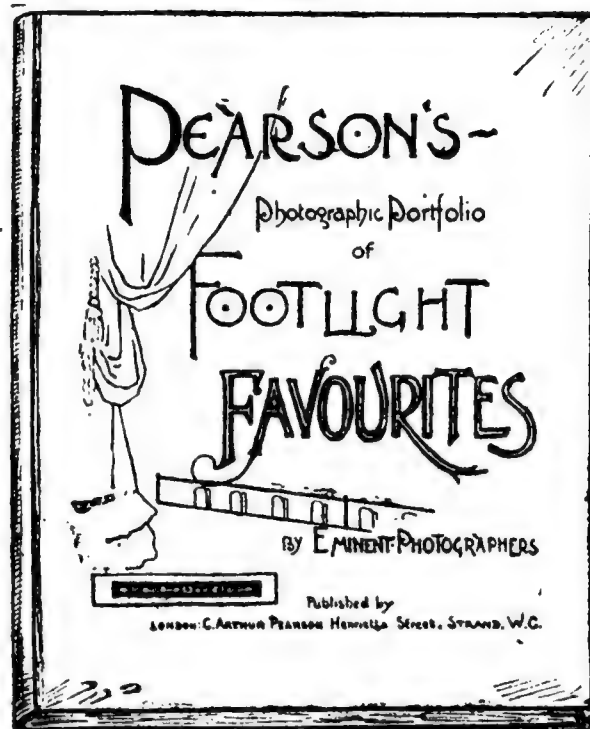
Twelve copies of this book will be given to the twelve persons who draw the most humorous sketches of an elephant with straight lines.



A Ten-Pound Note will be given to the reader who tells us what Farmer Hayseed's great idea was. See "Farmer Hayseed's Dilemma" in the Xmas Double Number of SHORT STORIES.



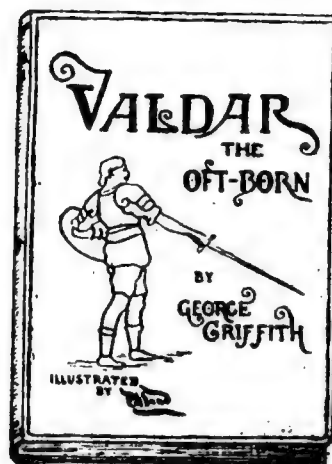
Twelve of these bags will be given to the twelve children under fourteen who send us the most interesting scrap-book made up of Christmas and New Year cards. The books of the prize winners will be given to some hospital. The others will be returned if stamps are inclosed for that purpose. The bags are worth 10s. 6d. each, and each contains half-a-sovereign.



Twelve copies of this volume will be given to the twelve persons who make up the cleverest composite picture of all or any of the illustrations appearing in the Xmas Double Number of "Short Stories."



Twelve copies of this work will be given to the twelve ladies who most cleverly answer a simple sum in arithmetic. Open to Ladies only.



Twelve copies of this work will be given to the twelve persons who make the cleverest anagram on the words: "VALDAR THE OFT-BORN BY GEORGE GRIFFITH."



Twelve copies of Vol 1. of Pearson's Magazine will be given to the twelve persons who send us the oldest coin. These coins will be afterwards sold for the benefit of next year's FRESH AIR FUND.

THE Disappearance of Norman Leigh.

BY HUAN MEE.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. F. SMERIE.

CHAPTER I.

"And is he gone? On sudden solitude
How oft that fearful question will intrude.
True but an instant past—and here he stood."

THE glory of the setting sun turns the river into shimmering liquid gold, and as he sinks lower and lower behind the thick banks of purple clouds the whole sky becomes luminous with a glorious fresco of crimson and gold which fades by imperceptible gradations until it merges itself into the cool pale blue of the East. All is silent save for the occasional farewell chirp of a bird, or the rippling musical swish of the cars as a boating party makes its way homeward.

The river has shaken the dust of Royal Windsor from its train, and now lingers lovingly around the dewy slopes of the Home Park, as though loth to leave so sweet a scene, and dreading contamination and pollution in the Great City below it.

Here it lingers calm, peaceful, and serene, for but a few short miles, and then its beauty must depart as it becomes the highway of the city of the world, grim, dreary, and unlovely as the Great City itself.

Pulled in by the side of the bank, under the shelter of a clump of willows, lies a boat, a tiny, dainty, little craft, with its twisted silken ropes, its cushioned seats, and glittering brass-work, a skiff built by a man with a knowledge of the requirements of the upper reaches—room for one to scull, one to dream and play at steering, and not an inch for the objectionable third party.

The curl of blue smoke which occasionally finds its way through the trees, and then disappears with a puff, proclaims the presence of the sterner portion of humanity, while a light girlish laugh, which ever and anon bursts forth, proves that even in this advanced century the old, old tradition: "It is not good for man to be alone," has survived all ages and all prejudices.

She is a girl, a somewhat demure-looking, English girl, with the brightest of blue eyes, a fair, pink and white complexion, a charming face beaming into the loveliest of dimples as she smiles, and hair that glistens like burnished copper as the rays of the setting sun filter through the trees, and surround her as with a halo. Fair, and yet not divinely pale, she has the regal beauty with which the painter has made his most ideal, and yet, as she reclines in the boat, she looks like a simple creature in a simple dress, with a demure-looking hat hanging by the ribbons from her forehead, she makes a pretty picture against the verdant background. A girl like the average Englishman would be proud to find himself in love with.

Her companion is a man who seems to have seen as much of the rough side of the world as she has enjoyed the smooth. His face, bronzed and browned, and with a deep, white scar across the forehead, tells of a life spent in other lands, and a wound which must have been almost a death-blow.

They have been sitting silent for some moments, he gazing intently into her face, and she, with womanly personality, seemingly altogether absorbed in the beauty of the scene around. At length, with a consciousness that she has the undivided attention of her audience, she speaks. "If I were six feet high, and almost as many broad," she says, with an utter disregard to the proportions of an ideal man, "I should be ashamed to fill my great body with silly fancies only fit for a foolish girl. How a man who has travelled as you have can be so simple as to be a believer in the supernatural is past my comprehension."

"Perhaps it is because of my wandering life that I am so," he answers. "Camping at night in a valley in the heart of the Nevada has a deadly solitude about it. To stand at the door of one's tent, to see the black, shapeless masses of the mountains on every side, seeming to touch the very sky itself, to live a life like that for many days, never to hear the sound of another voice, and yet always to be on



the alert—perhaps that is inclined to make one superstitious."

"Nonsense, Norman," the girl replies with an air of superiority which savours of an engagement between the pair, "that should have no effect upon an educated inhabitant of a civilized country. Your ideas of predestination are not very complimentary to me. If it had all been arranged before, there is nothing very flattering in the fact that you fell in love with me immediately upon your return to England."

Wonderful place of feminine logic; she feels the prejudices of a lifetime have been swept away by her reasoning.

"I argue the other way," he replies. "If it were not all predestined, why should such a good-for-nothing fellow as I have been taken so much care of, and brought scatheless through so many dangers, to meet the sweetest girl in England directly he arrives; to have her, figuratively speaking, standing upon the quay with outstretched arms to welcome him with smiles and kisses directly he reached the shore?"

"What a dreadfully forward young person this sweetest girl must be!" she answers with a laugh, "but seriously, Norman, do you think you have been brought through scatheless? Perhaps that scar upon your forehead may have something to do with your absent-mindedness and strange fancies."

"They are not fancies, but facts."

"Oh!"

"I only speak of what I know."

"But you cannot persist in saying that it is possible for a human being to suddenly disappear from this world, to evaporate as it were, and leave no trace behind?"

"I do say it. I have seen it myself. Listen, and you shall judge. Some years ago, just when I started upon my last venture which brought me my fortune, I and another fellow were encamped in a long valley, extending without a dip to the foot of the giant Nevada. He was one of the best of men, one of the kindest and noblest of companions, and on a morning I shall never forget, he left me, saying he was going to smoke a pipe in the open. A minute afterwards I followed him, stepped out of the tent and looked round. He was gone. I could smell the lingering odour of his burnt tobacco, a match lay smouldering on the ground where he had cast it, but not a sound, not a sign of him who had left me but a few seconds before. My heart stood still, as I called and called again, and I shivered, though the sun blazed down upon me. I could see a long stretch of plain on every side, smooth and level, not a hollow, crack, or hill, and not a man in sight. Laugh if you will, but never since have I met my comrade, never since have I felt the horror of such solitude, everything bright on earth and in the heavens above me, and yet a feeling of dread, unexplainable, unaccountable."

The girl shivers and glances nervously over her shoulder.

"Let us get away," she says. "Night is falling so quickly; it will be dark before we reach home."

With a vigorous effort he pushes the boat out into the stream, and then with long, firm strokes, urges it down the river.

"I am sorry I have so troubled you," he says at length. "I have lived the life of a savage so long that I forget such weird stories are not suitable for all company. Would you like to hear the full account of the discovery of the 'Will-o'-the-wisp' Mine, by one Norman Leigh, the present holder of the champion belt for happiness in the world?"

"Yes, Norman, let it be that, something matter-of-fact. I do not like these gruesome stories in the twilight of the river."

"Well, once upon a time a young man who had had great expectations of a life of comparative idleness, found himself suddenly thrown upon his own resources, and compelled to look about in earnest for some means of making a fortune, instead of having one fall into his hands, as he had been brought up to expect. He was at the age when to conquer seems easy, to fail impossible, and he therefore at once decided to leave this ancient country, and to fly to the land of youth and promise, of freedom, fraternity, and colossal fortunes."

"America?"

"Precisely—the Far West; and there one fine day he found himself with a neat little sum of \$1,000 intact. To leave the third person, and come to first, at that time I was filled with many ideas, which I considered were too brilliant for these antiquated islands, but which I certainly believed would be seized upon with avidity by those whom I had always regarded as cuteness personified. Three years after my arrival I had found my level, had turned my hand to many things, and just managed to keep going with occasional drawings upon my capital. Then came the opportunity I had waited for—a fortune was offered to me for a few hundreds, a gold mine, a Tom Tiddler's Ground in the heart of the Nevada. I hesitated, read an expert's

opinion, the assay of the ore, the title deeds, and eventually visited the mine and purchased it right out. It had been already partially worked, and so heavy machinery was needed to resume operations in a modest way. I had studied mining and mineralogy at college and again in New York, and as I therefore flattered myself I knew a good thing when I saw it, I counted my fortune made.

"It was during the first weeks at the mine that the incident happened which I have just related to you. I lost the noblest friend man ever had."

"I engaged as overseer," he continued after a pause, "Paul Restron—who turned out to be one of the biggest scoundrels who ever trod this earth—and a few men, and then we set to work. For a day all went well, the quartz came out rich, it was crushed at a three-stamp battery on the mine, and the results exceeded my wildest anticipations; and then a change, a fearful change occurred. Day after day went on and not an ounce, not a grain of gold, only rock which was absolutely barren. Over-

come at last with anxiety, I paid a heavy fee to a celebrated expert to come and examine the mine, and then my worst fears were realized.

"Salted," he said; "it's not worth a red cent, no one but a green-headed fool could have been so misled. It's an experience for you, young 'un, and you know what experience does, don't you?" Too dazed to answer him, I walked aimlessly away with every atom of pluck and spirit knocked out of me. For hours I wandered, where I know not, and then, tired to death and sick at heart, I dragged myself back to seek oblivion in sleep. Two men were lounging on the grass smoking, and not wishing to enter into any conversation with them, I threw myself down to wait until they had retired before I went to my own hut. I recognised them by their voices—Paul Restron, my overseer; and Jabez Phillips, one of my workmen.

"How was it," Phillips was saying as I approached, "that the expert declared the mine was 'salted,' and you swear it's the richest in the States?"

"I held my breath, and my heart seemed almost to stop its beating at the suddenness of the shock."

"How was it?" Restron growled. "Simple enough; any fool could see it had been faked, and he didn't look any further. He's a fool, and those who sold it to the green 'un were bigger. Thousands of pounds have been spent on that mine, and the idiots who worked it along it up when they were within a few inches of cutting a lode, to say nothing of having driven an adit parallel with it for half its length. Yah! I tell you they're all fools, every one of 'em."

"Norman, you are a born actor."

"Why?"

"Because you enter so fully into your story. I can almost fancy it is the man himself who is speaking."

"Well, if all else fails, I shall know what to turn to; but to continue. 'The mine, I tell you,' Restron went on, 'is about the richest in the States, and we've got to have it. No one knows about this but ourselves. The expert has missed it, and you can bet your bottom dollar that those who 'salted' the mine did not know they were faking the ground within a foot of a true fissure vein. There it is, and we've got to have it.'

"What a pity," said Phillips, "that we can't step back thirty or forty years. In those days we could have slung the young 'un down a shaft, and stuck to the mine by right of possession."

"Yes," meditatively replied Restron, "it is a pity, ain't it? Times were very free and easy then, but now it's different, you can't sneak a mine by just getting rid of the owner; no, not even if it ain't worth a cent. We live in an age of titles, Government royalties, inspectors and such-like rot, and we must act accordingly. We'll approach the young 'un to-morrow, tell him we've decided we should like to go on a bit and chance our luck, and offer to buy his deeds for a tanner. He's sure to sell, and there you are, all in good order and above board."

"Suppose he won't sell?"

"Then we'll follow him, quiet him, collar the deeds, and swear we bought 'em. How's that?"

"Very good, shake," and then they rose to their feet and sauntered away."

Norman pauses in his narrative for a moment, and not a



sound disturbs the heavy stillness of the night, but the alternating click-click of the rowlocks, and the soft swish-as he feathers with his returning blades.

"Now, Constance, comes the saddest part of the story." "You mean their murderous attack upon you?" "No," he replies with a quiet laugh, "I was not thinking of that; this is the saddest part because I must confess my own want of sense and courage. In that moment of revolution I considered two things only, one, that I was a rich man, and the other, my life was not worth much. Without a moment's hesitation I decided to fly to civilisation. I had my title deeds in my belt, deeds originally emanating from the State itself, my rights were beyond dispute, and I determined to leave the mine to take care of itself, and only to return when I could maintain those rights by force of arms."

"But why call this want of sense, Norman? Surely it was the wisest thing you could have done."

"Certainly, if I had proceeded to a neighbouring township and there announced my discovery, but I did nothing of the kind; I was sick of my lonely life, and I decided to make straight for New York, and there dispose of my property through agents who would conduct all arrangements, have the mine again examined, and then carry out its sale for twenty times more than I could have got on the spot. A good business arrangement in the ordinary way, but had under the circumstances. Had I proclaimed the mine a valuable one, appointed caretakers and all the rest of it, Bestron and Phillips would have been disarmed, they dare not then have touched it. But what did I do? I, to all intents and purposes, abandoned a worthless mine, one that would have been sold for a mere song, and so played into the rascals' hands. If they had obtained the deeds, what were they, the deeds of a mine, certified by an able expert to be worthless, and who could have said when the rich vein was ostensibly discovered it was anything more than a bit of luck, or, at the very worst, a specimen of American cuteness? Now you see the mistake."

"Yes, it was unfortunate you did not think of that."

"It was. My reasoning now is perfect, but it is after the event. To resume. Directly the men had disappeared I rushed to my hut, and then, like a young fool, took to my heels as though the pair were chasing me but a few yards behind. Absurd, no doubt, but I was young, fond of my life, and no liker of the company of assassins; let these be my excuses. I made for the nearest station of the Northern-Pacific line, and there waited, gnawing my fingers with impatience, for the train which should carry me across the continent."

"On the railway station I saw them again, they arrived dead beat, gaunt and haggard, an hour before the train was due, and eyed me with rage blazing from their eyes as they appreciated I was getting further and further from them, and in such pleasant company I journeyed to New York. Bestron, as you will have gathered, was almost a civilised rogue. He knew that my first visit would be to a banker's to lodge my deeds, and, therefore, they contented themselves by simply keeping me in sight and making no attack upon me. For a month I tried without giving too many particulars to get rid of my mining property, but it was impossible. Wall Street had been badly bitten, Nevada was accursed, and they would have none of it, and advised me to cross to England. That I decided to do, and privately had most searching investigation made of the mine, experts' opinions, assays, crushings, and valuations, and at last it was proved beyond the possibility of doubt that the mine was rich, phenomenally rich. Too much secrecy again."

"The mine was left under proper care, but New York knew nothing of it, and Bestron and Phillips still hunted me as the holder of the deeds of what was generally looked upon as a few useless holes in the ground. Then I dare say I could have sold it, but I had been inflated with the stories of the enormous prices paid in London, and I decided that London was the market. It was a pretty game, and one I paid dearly for. On my way to the boat I was set upon, and half murdered by the pair, they thinking that I must have the deeds upon me, but as luck would have it, they were foiled—I had sent them to a reliable agent in Southampton. It was three months before I could start again, and then they must have lost trace of me for I've never seen them since."

"Where are the deeds now, Norman?"

"In my belt; to-morrow they will be in the possession of the syndicate who intend to work the mine. After all, I've not been such a fool, for I shall get ten times what I should have been paid in New York. That country of freedom is, after all, one of fraud. They are like our own Socialists—the reforms must always be in others, never in themselves. But there," he adds with a laugh, "I am a landowner and, of course, a Conservative; I like the masses in the abstract, but as a body they are essentially rowdy and essentially vulgar. Let us do what we can for them, of course, but only as we should make our horses or our dogs comfortable. Don't try to raise them; they would rather you didn't, and I for one don't intend to."

"Where are we, Norman?" says the girl, with an attempt to turn the conversation which, as a woman of infinite tenderness, has become distasteful to her, because of its flippant callousness. "Is this Old Windsor?"

"Yes, there's the lock," he answers, catching the tinge of sorrow in her voice. "Don't take any notice of my talk. I am fearfully changeable, one moment I feel for the people, for their sorrows and labours, the sweating and grinding down they have to endure, and the next, I hate them for their blind, headstrong folly, their discontent, and worst of all, their drunkenness."

A damp, hot mist has fallen over the river, and the lock, losing all its beauty, looms out dark and desolate, and the

gates seem like the entrance to a tomb. The trees around and the clouds above throw it into the deepest shade, and the girl shivers as they approach.

"I seem frightened to go through to-night," she says, "it looks so weird, I feel I cannot sit still and sink lower and lower, hemmed in by those greasy walls with the threatening clouds above us."

"It is my fault," he answers; "we should have been home long ago, but the night has fallen so quickly I had not noticed it. Go into the lock-house, Constance, and join me again when I am through."

Smiling assent she gives her hand, and stepping lightly from the boat, climbs the bank and walks into the house, to sit there for a few moments, the story of the Mine, the escapes and perils of Norman running over and over again in her mind, and then unable to longer restrain herself, she leaves the house and walks back to the lock.

"Are you not tired of being alone, Norman?" she asks, and as no voice replies, with a sudden fear she clutches a post and leans far over the lock. The little boat is there, sinking slowly as the water falls, but empty, rocking from side to side, grazing its varnished wood work against the chains, while he who should have kept it steady has disappeared.

"Norman! Norman!" she cries wildly. "Stephens, is Mr. Leigh with you?" "With me, miss?" a voice replies from out the mist. "Why, no; he's in the boat." "Bring a light, then, quickly; he has fallen, and must be clinging to one of the chains."

In a moment a light is brought, which throws up the whole interior of the lock—a lock empty, save for that little boat. No hand clinging to a chain for life, no white face gazing from out those inky waters. "Norman!" she cries again, looking eagerly on every side, and scanning the country round as a faint flash of lightning illuminates the sky; "Norman!" But no answer comes. He is gone.

CHAPTER II.

"How fading are the joys we dote upon!
Like apparitions seen and gone."

WITH a satisfied smile upon his usually somewhat serious face, Norman sits in the bow of the boat and watches Constance as she ascends the bank to the lock-house. Waving a parting salute from the tips of her fingers, she enters, and with her, according to Norman's ideas, departs the last ray of light, the last touch of beauty and colour in the landscape.

Many of the greatest calamities of the world have been brought about by the most insignificant trifles, the greatest battles decided by the minutest detail, and had Constance lingered for but a few minutes by the rose-covered porch of the lock-house, the mystery of Norman Leigh's disappearance would have been solved in its very making, and the sorrow and misery which were now deepening down in thick clouds upon their lives would have been at once dispelled. Left alone, Norman, carelessly humming a popular song, stretches himself at full length in the boat, and lighting a cigarette, gives himself up to reflection, from which he is only aroused by the long creak of the lock gates as they open. The last grey speck of twilight has faded, and the sky is covered with one dense mass of thunder clouds, while the deep, distant, sullen boom, as they surge up against the wind, presages the coming storm.

The river, which looked such a bright, peaceful picture only an hour ago, has caught the depression, and the clear, limpid waters reflect only the black, grim, angry clouds, while the drooping willows on the bank shiver and rustle apprehensively as they bow their heads before the rising wind.

"Well, this a cheerful night," mutters Norman, as he paddles into the lock. "We shall get it nicely presently; I almost think we had better go by road."

Motionless he stands in the boat, keeping it steady against the side of the lock, and gazes at the threatening masses which rumble and roll as they sluggishly cross the sky. Deeper and deeper the shades fall, and a silence, dead, breathless, hot, and oppressive, reigns supreme—the lull before the storm.

The intermittent lightning shows up the river and the lock as clear as day, and in one of the flashes Norman sees, or his disordered, superstitious brain deludes him that he sees, leaning against the long arm of the lock gate, Gilbert Jaston, his friend who disappeared so mysteriously in the plains of Nevada.

What a torrent of conflicting emotions rush through his mind, the wonder—for he is a superstitious man, notwithstanding all the reasoning of his friends, and the scientific explanations of this enlightened nineteenth century—whether his friend, who so suddenly and mysteriously had been taken from him on the eve of prosperity, had now appeared to warn him of some impending danger, or, on the other hand, to foreshadow some great and new joy. Surely it was the new-born happiness in his life that this spirit friend had come to share and hallow. It must be so. Here on the happiest day of all his life, the day on which Constance had first fired the date when she would be his wife, the man who in the old bygone and beloved time had

been his friend, and more than brother, had come from the shadow-land, from the far sphere of the unknown, to shed his silent blessing on Norman's earthly joy.

But the next instant there shot another and more bewildering thought through Norman's brain. Suppose—it seemed amazing—but suppose Jaston had disappeared in some more ordinary way. Despite his rooted belief in the occult, he wished to think this possible. Perhaps Jaston had fallen faint in the heat of the day, and, hidden in the long prairie grass, lying quiet and silent, was passed by on that boundless stretch of grass-land. It might be so, and happy chance and circumstance had brought him to the spot that night. Then again, was it mere fancy—a fantasy, a will-o'-the-wisp, was it his imagination, hot to fever heat and overwrought by the recounting of that strange and weird experience that he had related to Constance? Had his senses deceived him in the dim light? Had the wildness of desire wrought its own fulfilment? Had the very wish that his friend Jaston might know of his happiness and share in his joy created just the image of his friend, an unreality, a dream, a shadow?

The night is becoming wilder, the reverberations of the thunder louder and louder, and with each crash of heaven's artillery nearer and nearer come the inky storm clouds. The boat lurches slightly, as the water gradually begins to fall, and for a second or two Norman's whole attention is directed to the skiff itself, and he turns his eyes from the fascination of that dimly visible spirit face. Having righted the boat he looks again, fully expecting to find that his imagination has tricked him, that his heart has aided it, and played him this wild freak. He looks back ready to find it a dream, and yet hoping that something in it may be a reality, and sees Jaston still standing in the same attitude, and gazing at him with the warmth of friendship that can be only known by those who for day on day, week on week, almost for year on year, have lived together in Nature's wildest solitudes, far apart from the spoilt children of the world's big cities.

"Gilbert," cries Norman, "Gilbert, is it you?"

But no answer breaks the silence, only the peculiar shivering of the trees before the storm sounds in the dead calm. Can it be, he wonders, that his voice has not reached him? No, he must have heard, for Jaston leaves the bridge and walks towards the brink of the lock. He beckons to Norman, and then silently turns and glides onward. Without a moment's further hesitation, not doubting now that, if a spirit, this visitation portends something great for good or evil, and trusting that it may be no vision, but the man himself, Norman clutches the chains hanging at the side of the lock, and swinging himself clear of the boat, draws himself up on to the bank. Jaston is a few yards ahead, but turning for an instant he notes that Norman follows, then, with a gesture of invitation, glides on.

Swiftly Norman pursues him, his heart beating wildly, his whole frame on fire with excitement, everything forgotten in this mad chase after Gilbert Jaston, his long-lost friend.

Still onward and onward, quicker and quicker, the form of Gilbert Jaston takes its way, and with a wild infatuation Norman follows. Crash upon crash the coming storm sweeps down upon them, roll upon roll the thunder peals and rumbles, and the glare of the lightning fitfully illuminates the scene.

Norman quickens his steps, but ever the shadow, or the man, leads. Easily and without effort, onward the form of Gilbert Jaston speeds.

At last the storm breaks. One blinding blue flash, as if the anger of Heaven has burst forth in fiery punishment; one tremendous and appalling crash, as though the sky and earth have rushed together, and hell itself has gaped, and then the flood-gates open, and the hissing rain pours down in one wild torrent to the steaming ground.

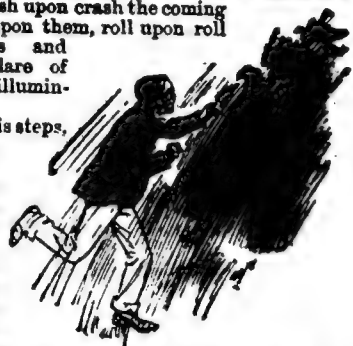
The trees bend and quiver in the power of the elements, the great oaks and mighty elms shake and tremble beneath the onslaught, and still the lightning flashes and the thunder roars and crashes across the heavens, as if, indeed, the day of doom had come. Drenched to the skin, Norman staggers onward, almost blinded by each lurid flash, deafened by the roar of the thunder, on and on he plunges, heedless of the way, oblivious of the road, ever following the form of Gilbert Jaston. Once or twice he cries aloud: "Gilbert, Gilbert, stay, stay; where would you lead me? Speak to me, Gilbert, speak!"

But no answer comes, only the relentless figure moves on and on. No answer comes, unless it be the crashing of the thunder and the vivid splendour of the lightning.

Half dead with fatigue, excitement, and superstitious fear, Norman dashes onward through the pelting storm, heedless of the shelter afforded by the trees, ever pursuing the figure of Gilbert Jaston. At length the shadow turns sharply to the right, and gliding across an open glade, takes refuge beneath a group of oaks, and Norman, spent and breathless, covers the few remaining yards with a frantic dash, to discover—nothing.

Round and round the trees he rushes, crying loudly the name of his friend, and as no voice replies, no form is to be seen, deeper and deeper the dread of solitude forces itself upon his distracted brain. Again he lives the episode he had a short time back related, again he feels the horror of the moment when Gilbert Jaston first disappeared, again the demon supernatural rides havoc in his brain, and tramples down the sophistries and philosophies of the century.

The very elements seem to war against him, madden



him, and, like a child, he stands helpless, awed, and terror-stricken as the lightning now in never-ceasing flashes plays around him. He waits irresolute for a moment, seeking vainly to shut out those rendings of heaven from his aching eyes, and then wildly he starts again. Countess, Gilbert Jaston, the river—all are forgotten in his ecstasy of terror; his only thought is to hasten, to run, from what he knows not, and where, he cares nothing, so that it may hide from those fearful cutting flashes, from those hellish peals which grind and shatter his half-demented mind. On and on he staggers, his hands torn and muddy, his arms, tossed wildly in the air, drenched to the skin, shivering, and yet with several fires blazing in his head, until at last like one shot in battle, suddenly, with almost a leap, he stops, clutches his forehead with frenzied madness, and then falls headlong to the ground beneath a tree standing like a giant midst its neighbours.

Two men have sought its shelter from the storm, and stand talking beneath its branches on the other side.

"What a night," says one with an oath. "What a night to be caught miles from an inn, with no shelter but a tree, which may be struck at any moment."

"Bah," the other replies, "you know what they say about men born to be hung. I was a fool to be led on such a wild-cat scheme; a fool to be led by you in such a style. What good has it done us, you and your fortunes, your title-deeds, and gold mines? Bah! curse the weather."

"Phillips," the first speaker quietly continues, "you were born a few years too late; a century ago you would have made a splendid footpad, but if you'll pardon the expression, you're not worth a tinker's carve at modern villainy. You're too irritable. You're all right as a pal, but alone you'd be a fearful bungler."

"Bungler!" Phillips shrieks in a paroxysm of rage. "Bungler! Look here, Reston, I can stand a lot, but don't let me hear of your blasted superiority, because I can't stand that sort of thing, so that's straight. Who's been the bungler in this job? You have—you, from the first to the last; you've bungled it because of your cursed conceit in your own methods. If it had been left to me—"

"If it had been left to you," the other interrupts with a slight show of temper, "you'd have gone for him on the train and got lynched for your pains. I tell you again, you're a bungler, and when this matter is through, it will be I, and not you, who will have done it."

"Yes, when Niagara turns to gin sling."

"Now don't be a fool just because you've got your jacket wet. Who plotted this through? Who kept you back from going for Leigh in New York, when you were as strong as a horse? Who would carry the deeds about with him?"

"Yes, who attacked him on his way to the boat for nothing?"

"That was an error of judgment, because I underrated him. Who found he was sending his deeds to London to sell? Who shadowed him to Southampton, from Southampton to London, and then never had a chance of getting at him? Followed him for days in London, and then tracked him here, where he spends his time in love-making? Who did that, I say, was it you or I?"

"Both of us."

"Both of us! A pretty mess you'd have made of it, and now how do we stand?" Phillips, I regret to have to drag you down to such low crimes, but we must become common house-breakers. I have the plan of the hotel where he is staying; we can easily reach the window of his room. That is how we shall do the trick, and it must be done to-night. He went to a building in London this morning, called a Safe Deposit; his first visit there was when he landed from America. Then he took the deeds, to-day he fetched them, and to-morrow, doubtless, if we do not act now, it will be too late. I may be wrong in my calculations, but I think not. I have studied the finer crimes, while you have given your attention to the coarser."

"But how are we to get 'em; chloroform him?"

"Chloroform him? What a magnificent villain you would have made for a sensational novel or a melodrama. Don't you know, Phillips, that it would take us about ten minutes to chloroform an able-bodied man? And then probably one of us would get along out of the window in the struggle."

"Well, how the devil are you going to do it? Don't sit there bandying your tasty English like a cursed school-master. Can't you speak up like a man?"

"He must never leave the hotel alive."

"Ah, that's business now."

"I have done much to further our cause. May I look to you to settle this trifle?"

"Your hand, call it settled. You give me something to do, and I'm always willing. I'm no skulker, and I ain't no great scholar, but if you says he ain't to leave the hotel again, well, he won't, and there's an end of the matter. Let's be off."



The fury of the storm has passed, and one by one the stars faintly glimmer through the light clouds which pass swiftly across the sky. The earth, refreshed and sweetened from the downpour, exhales Nature's own scent of freshness and purity, a full harvest moon, half through her night's journey, shines overhead, and as the sky becomes dotted brighter and brighter with its specks of silver, as the storm subsides itself to sleep in the distance a man, who has lain long at the foot of the tree, rises and, like one groping in the dark, feels for support and stands shaking as though smitten with ague.

Then from the other side two figures flunter, and the three stand facing each other.

"Leigh!" cries Reston, "by all that's holy! This is better than house-breaking. Our luck has turned at last."

With a rush they are upon him, bearing him backwards to the ground, where he struggles more like a beast than a man, with short, sharp, snarling breaths, plunging, kicking, and biting like a maniac. Twice with a wild burst he flings them from him and rises to his feet at bay once more, twice he is overpowered again and flung bruised and battered upon the ground, and there at last he lies with all their weight upon him to keep him down.

"Look, Phillips, by your knee, the roots of the tree show through the ground; crush the madman's skull against it. Harder—again, ah—Tear open his shirt! Damnation! we are fools again. Now, his belt; money, yes, and I have them at last—the deeds!"

"Shall I finish him?"

"No, wait a bit, it's better not, if possible; let us watch."

The man upon the ground mutters uneasily, the moon shines full upon his bleeding wounds, and the others start back with horror.

"Lord, he looks ghastly. Reston, the brandy!"

"For him?"

"No, curse him, let him be. For myself."

The victim of their attack rolls over and then struggles to his feet and looks Reston full in the face.

"Can you tell me where I am?" he mouths. "I think I've had a nasty fall: something happened, but I forget what."

"If you want the London Road," Reston replies, "it's there." And they watch him as he drags himself across the grass and falls senseless again by the side of the road, then they follow him and stand over him once more.

"Better let me finish him, Reston."

"No, you fool, can't you see he's as good as dead; if he lives he'll never remember this night's work. He was half mad when we met him, now he's clean gone; if you murder him the country will be at our heels."

He stops and lays his hand on Norman's breast. "You've done it. He's dead. Come!"



Hours afterwards, in the grey dawn, Norman Leigh awakes to consciousness, but to no recollection of the past, or of himself. With his senses scattered like the pearls of a broken necklace, he sits there more solitary, friendless, and forlorn than ever in his life before.

By-and-by, when the sun shines high in the heavens, a young man, sturdily built, with a sunny, good-tempered face, and fair hair that crisply curls about his brow, tramps towards London on the Windsor Road, and by the wayside finds him who has fallen among thieves.

Oscar Shephworth, a man cursed by all lovers of law and order, an Apollo in form, but a demon in his spirit of revolution, halts as he sees him, and then, with tenderness his enemies could never have believed, plays the good Samaritan for, perhaps, the only time in his wasted life.

CHAPTER III.

"Flushed was his face and distorted with passion, and wildly he shouted: 'Down with the tyrants of England! We never have sworn them allegiance.'"

TANNER STREET, Seven Dials, is in process of reclamation, and has been in that happy state of transition for three years.

During that period the Society for the Elevation of Tanner Street and its Vicinity has been at work, and now no one can deny what has been done.

Three years ago, when several Society ladies and gentlemen first turned their attention to the neighbourhood, it was, as they justly said, a blot upon the face of a civilised city; but now all is changed, and charitable Society smiles a conscious smile of self-laudation. Should the working-man of Tanner Street feel, after fourteen or fifteen hours' physical labour, that his mind needs nourishment, the Society's library, containing the highest class works of reference on the most abstruse subjects under the sun, is thrown open to him. Should the outcasts, homeless, and starving of the neighbourhood wish to cultivate their yearnings for art, the Society's picture gallery will ravish their eyes though their stomachs remain empty.

More than this, the Society instructs as well as elevates. Where is the man in Tanner Street who doubts that the sun can only last a few million odd years, or that such and such a planet is travelling at such and such a rate? That man, the Society asserts, cannot be found, for it has demonstrated all these things to him long ago, or at least would have done it if he had troubled to listen. The rising

generation has also much to be thankful for. What a glorious list is put before it! Book-keeping, shorthand, physiology, mineralogy, French, German, Spanish, and, doubtless, Sanskrit, if it expresses the slightest desire for it.

"Come and learn," the Society cries. "Even if you are only going to be a bus conductor, think of the advantage of being able to speak a few odd languages; or, if you are ambitious, why live on a good mechanic's wage when you can starve in a silk hat as a shorthand clerk in the city, and be a gentleman, although your father was a bricklayer?"

All work, however, and no play, will make even the homeless and starving dull, and the Society, in its beneficence, has given an eye to holidays; for should the penniless wanderer be ambitious to see the glories of other



lands, delightful little jaunts are arranged through Continental countries at so low a rate that it is scarcely credible how the expenses can be met. Perhaps it is the number, for many people make these trips, although it is rumoured they come not from Tanner Street at all. Yet, with these advantages Tanner Street is not satisfied, and many a lady subscriber, who regularly sends her cheque, lays down her morning paper and absolutely gasps at the ingratitude of man, as she reads the pithy police-court reports as to the general condition of the field of labour of her Society.

Tanner Street, notwithstanding all its advantages, is as it was three years ago. The same dirty squalid houses, with the broken and filthy windows, the same decrepid doorsteps, with the doors standing open and giving a delightful view of the greasy, begrimed inhabitants, the same gaunt, dissipated women, standing with their sleeves rolled up, gossiping from the windows, the same white-faced, sickly caricatures of babies, and the same staggering, blaspheming loafers. Tanner Street is obstinate, incorrigible, and refuses to be elevated or reformed. It is twilight. Hard by sounds the muffled roar of the traffic—for Tanner Street is within easy access of the theatres and clubs, and lies like Lazarus at the rich man's gates and starves, and the inhabitants are amusing themselves—as they did in the old days before their tone was elevated—fighting, drinking, and swearing.

A roar of laughter floats through the air from a crowd, standing in the midst of which a figure can be seen wildly gesticulating and calling upon his brother countrymen to rise as one man and overthrow the pillars of the state.

"Strike me, if the Professor ain't on the spout agin," shrieks a dishevelled specimen of womanhood from a top window. "Blimey, ain't he a thick 'un?"

"Oh, I call him a silly fool," a companion answers, "wot I see is, wot's the good of it all? Wot's the good of it?"

The man alluded to as the Professor is standing on a barrel surrounded by loafers and, with thick speech and unsteady feet, harangues the mob.

With the frenzy of a madman he pours forth a torrent of words, a flood of invectives upon their heads, which they receive with the devil-may-care good humour of the typical English loafer.

"Men of England," he shouts, "why will you be content to be like curs, beaten this way and that, kicked by everyone who can afford to wear boots, and scorned by the whole world? Why will you ever cringe before those who have been pleased to be placed in authority over you, and, like dogs, snarl for a moment and then return to be kicked again by a sneaking lot who have crawled out of their insignificance, and become great men in the kingdom, by toadying to those of royal blood? What is royal blood, forsooth, that it should live and thrive upon the souls of us who toil in the filthy courts at the very outskirts of their palaces? Why should the whole population of a kingdom toil and slave to keep one family in opulent idleness? Hereditary right! The right of kings to reign! The Lord's anointed! Bah! I snap my fingers at such phrases invented by those whose whole interest is to flaunt such lying titles in our faces, who would have us worship them and their wealth, bow down before the golden image of their greatness. Yes, they have the right, the hereditary right to reign, to oppress, to tax, and you, you have the right, the hereditary right to starve, and starve you will, and die, if you don't show your power."

The Professor's eloquence, the weekly tirade against the powers that be is beginning to tell, it is having at last an inflammatory effect, and a murmur of approval, deepening into a roar of applause, arises from the mob.

"Pipe off something about the French Revolution, Professor," shouts a man in the outskirts of the crowd.

"The French Revolution," exclaims the Professor, "bah, to what end? Do we feed infants on the food of men? Do we nourish sheep with the prey of lions? What shall be gained by telling a crowd of chicken-hearted fools, with not an ounce of pluck amongst them, of the exploits of men—men trodden down and oppressed as you are—men who rose and slew their tyrant masters, men who overthrew one of the greatest cities of the world, and cast the power of an empire to the four winds of Heaven; men who conquered, who triumphed, who were revenged, deadly revenged, for every cruel wrong and injury, as you might be now, now, this very night, if you but knew your power? I tell you the whole world waits for you. Everyone is tired of this endless string of princes, kings, and monarchs, each one more presumptuous, selfish, and overbearing than his predecessor. Unite, I say, unite, strike now, and strike hard a blow, a mighty blow, for liberty, equality, fraternity!"

The Professor makes a movement to descend from his rostrum, and the crowd yells its approval of his final sentiments.

"Don't leave them yet," a man standing behind him says, "they are ripe for action, a few more such words and you strike the first blow in aid of your fellow men, and

bring the world to the commencement of a universal millennium, a citizenship of labour against wealth."

"It is not well, Oscar Shephworth," he replies, "to goad the crowd too far."

For a moment Oscar looks him squarely in the eyes, and then says: "Go on! Go on! Strike now, once and for ever." And the Professor re-commences.

Oscar Shephworth mingles with the crowd and spreads sedition wherever he walks. He is a man with determination written on every feature of his face, one who is known all over Europe beneath a dozen aliases, as a spreader of the firebrand of anarchism; and yet so skilfully has he adapted the moral of the monkey, cat, and chestnuts story, that he has never yet put himself within the clutches of the law.

Ever since the day when Shephworth introduced the Professor to the neighbourhood of Tanner Street he had daily gained a greater and greater ascendancy over his victim, had made the Professor's eloquence promulgate his own seditious doctrines, and had spread thereby an epidemic of anarchy and of discontent that was insidiously penetrating to the very heart's blood of those who toiled as they were born to toil, and drove them wild and frenzied. The Professor was a mere tool, an automaton, with no thought beyond the will of Oscar Shephworth, no god but the brandy bottle.

The crowd cheers excitedly as the Professor resumes his oration. Oscar Shephworth is right—it is indeed the time to strike, the iron is hot, the mob is ready for revolt and destruction, and only waits a leader.

Stronger grows the language of the Professor, more forcible in its anarchisms, more highly coloured in its oaths.

"I tell you," he vociferates, "the whole world feeds and fattens on the life blood of such as you; you who toil from dawn to midnight for starvation pay in what your masters contemptuously style 'the slums of London.' What do these grasping capitalists do? I ask you. They reap the advantages of your toil, they gather in the harvest of profit from your ill-paid labour, they drive you to despair, to drink, and then reap more profit from your degradation. Look, look, I say, at this brightly lighted gin palace, that graces your poor Tanner Street with its seductive warmth and light. That belongs to your capitalists, to your lady and gentlemen shareholders, your parsons and keepers of the fold, who draw their snug dividends each half-year, and never give a thought to where the money comes from—never care what misery they are fostering.

"Curse them, I say, curse their vaunted modern civilization and their self-satisfied Christianity. The whole animal kingdom preys the one upon the other; the whole human race the stronger upon the weaker. But they miscalculate; which, I say, is the stronger? You, I tell you—you—the masses, the mob, the people, and yet you know it not. Of what use is the handful of London police against the power we shall be united? None, absolutely none. Unite, I say, unite. Sweep London before you, and England will follow. Start now—at once. Strike, strike, the time is ripe; the whole world groans beneath the burden of oppression and longs to throw off the yoke. Lead them, show them the way. You are the pioneers of freedom, the heralds of success."

The roar of the crowd grows fiercer, almost tigerish in its ferocity. For a moment the Professor pauses in his harangue, then, with a fine gesture of dramatic effect, points to the distillery, a mass of flaming gas jets and flauity decoration.

"Let us begin here," he cries, "let us strike the first blow in the great revolution here. Show that you are men to-night, and to-morrow, instead of scores we shall be thousands, nay, millions, the ill-paid, sweated, and starving millions. We are tired of this life, tired and sick to death of it. We loathe the vaunted civilisation of this nineteenth century, with its progress at the cost of flesh and blood. Curse the country and the Government that prides itself upon place and position, fame and empty glory, that feeds the heathen and the stranger, and leaves the poor within its gates to starve, to die, to rot. Down with this policy of hereditary right, I say, down with the legislature that robs the poor to keep the rich. I brand you all as cowardly curs unless you strike to-night! Strike once and for ever a decisive blow for liberty or death!"

Lashing himself into a fury for a grand peroration, the Professor sways backwards and forwards in his frenzy. "Down with your Monarchies," he yells, "your Imperial powers, your capitalists, and grinders of the poor. Before many days are past we will have them all beneath our feet, and then, as in the time of the greatest, grandest revolution the world has ever seen, we will repay with interest every slight and slur that we have suffered. Aye, we will repay a thousandfold, a hundred thousandfold. We will sweep them before us like chaff before the wind, mow them down like grass before the sickle, until at last the British Empire shall cease to exist, and these dominions be known as the Federated Republic of Great Britain!"

Again the roar of the crowd rumbles sullen and ominous. Then a stone flies through the air, and shivers one of the distillery windows. For a moment the mob stares at the wreck, standing undecided, then the voice of Oscar Shephworth is heard, crying: "Men, don't be cowards. Now is the time for action—there is your leader—follow him!"

"Hurrah! hurrah!" is the answer, as in one irresistible stream, like the rush of a mill race, the mob makes for the distillery, and volleys of stones hurtling through the air crash against the plate-glass windows and smash them to atoms. The swing doors are wrenched from their hinges, and the crowd pours in. Wanton damage and destruction, like some virulent pestilence, is upon them; mirrors are

shivered, rows of bottles overturned, the tills pillaged, the whole place looted, plundered, and demolished.

"Citizens," yells the Professor, jumping upon one of the counters, and flourishing a brandy bottle in one hand and a tumbler in the other, "citizens, you have struck the first blow and conquered. I give you a toast—'The Federated Republic of Great Britain!'" and he swallows a tumblerful of the spirit.



"Trill—Tr-r-rill!"

A long, shrill whistle sounds before the applause that greets this toast has died away.

"The police!" The whisper runs round, and the faintest hearted drop their glasses or their missiles and try to escape.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, tramp, then a loud commanding voice outside: "Surround the house!" And the police appear in the doorways.

"Take every man in the place, they'll suffer for this night's work! In the name of the Queen I call on those not implicated to assist."

"Now, then!" the Professor yells, brandishing the bottle, "now, then, this is the time, keep together, don't go straggling about like a flock of sheep. Bah! Curse you for a set of chicken-hearted fools," he continues, as he sees his supporters, awed by the blue coats, handcuffed without raising a finger. "Where would France be now if her mobs had been such craven-hearted curs?"

"Seize that man," the sergeant says, "he's the ring-leader," and a zealous constable, sighing for public glory and the many honours with which this grateful country always rewards its police, rushes to the attack.

Crash! fairly between the eyes the brandy bottle catches him, splinters like a bursting shell, and down he rolls as an ox in the shambles, while the Professor takes a flying leap from the counter and disappears up the staircase, and then through an open trapdoor gains the roof, closely pursued by half-a-dozen of the police. There, behind a chimney-stack, he stands and watches the street below, watches the mob circled round the door. Many had cheered him so vociferously a few minutes before, and now each one is lending his eyesight to aid the police, each one anxious that to him shall belong the honour of first tracing the fugitive, of first pointing out where he is concealed.

The English mob is always anxious to side with right—if right is might. The fickle mob. How they long to prove by mighty deeds that they know no sympathy with this man, who must be surely led in chains to-night. With what subdued homage they hang about the burly officers with hints as to how to capture the offender, with what solicitous lamentations they watch the removal of the wounded man, and then what a cry of exultation goes up as they see their late leader standing erect on the stone parapet surrounding the top of the building.

The police on the roof spread out, and in a semicircle approach, driving the Professor backwards until he stands on the very edge of the stone coping, and there he halts.

The murmuring of the crowd stops, and they wait, holding their breath as they watch the one figure standing out against the sky.

He kneels for a moment upon the coping, and then as the police make a rush to take him, swings himself bodily over, and drops upon the slanting roof of a house some ten or fifteen feet below.

Simple road to destruction. He strikes the roof, slimy and slippery with the evening moisture, and helplessly slides down, catching at every crevice at every joint to save himself. His late supporters stand back and range themselves round the particular paving stone which they calculate will receive him, and then gaze upward again, just in time to see him, with the same headlong madness as before, grasp the gutter, and, having stayed his descent for a moment, swing himself over, clasp a shaking drain pipe and so descend until level with an open window, through which he disappears.

Long afterwards, when the search is given up, when Tanner Street, wearied and over-excited, has sought relief in the rival establishment to the demolished distillery, a man creeps from the recesses of a narrow court, and unsteadily slouches Westward.

A closed carriage, drawn by a pair of high-stepping bays, is being rapidly driven through Eaton Square. An elegantly-constructed equipage which swings on its cradle springs, and tempts its occupants to sleep. They are three, a middle-aged man, who sits in a painfully erect position, as becomes the colonel of a local corps of yeomanry, a lady, for whom the seductive swaying of the carriage has proved too much, and a pale, delicate-looking girl, whose far-away air of sorrowful abstraction sadly belies the gaiety of her dress.

"Don't you think, Constance," the Colonel says, drawing himself even more upright, and speaking with about the same graciousness as he uses to his corps on parade, "don't you think that the tenor was miserably flat to-night?"

"I really do not think I noticed it much, papa."

"Oh, no, I suppose not; thoughts miles away as usual. You'll be as good company as your mother is soon if you keep on at this rate. Norman Leigh on the brain again; to think that a daughter of mine should be so mad. Do you know you're throwing away the finest years of your life, casting aside the best chances you'll ever get by your ridiculous conduct?"

"But, papa—"

"But, papa. Oh, of course, I know your everlasting

argument, you're not sure he's dead. Well, you never will be. If he's ever found neither you nor anyone else will recognise him, and what's more probable is that he's been fished out down the river, and buried in a pauper's grave, at the expense of some long-suffering parish, months ago."

The girl's eyes fill with tears at the coarse brutality of the speech, but further conversation is broken by the sudden reining in of the horses, with a start that throws the two unwillingly into each other's arms, and brings the third occupant with a jump from happy dreams to mundane life and the knowledge of a guiltily stolen nap under the very eye of an utterly selfish and tyrannical husband.

"A man lying full length in the roadway, Colonel. Almost ran over him," exclaims the footman appearing at the window.

"Well, get him out of the way; don't stand staring there. Pity you didn't run over him."

The man walks to the figure lying in the road, and stirs him with his foot—stirs him contemptuously, for there is a great gulf fixed between a respectable, sober footman in a family where want is unknown, and a man who lies in the gutter for the lack of a better resting place.

"Now, then, who are you walking on?" the weary outcast yells, rising on his elbow and shaking his fist at the surprised footman, "you miserable attenuated specimen of humanity. If you dare put your dirty boots on me again, I'll treat you as Hercules did the Hydra," after which classical allusion he falls back again and treats the interrupter of his slumbers to a string of vile and blasphemous oaths.

As the first word leaves the Professor's lips, the girl starts to her feet, and ere the sound of the last degrading oath has reached her, she is by his side. For a moment she stands and gazes down upon him, and then with a wild, hysterical shriek throws herself upon her knees by his side, and clutches the hand with which he wildly saws the air to give emphasis to his blasphemy.

"Norman! Norman! speak to me! It is I, Constance speak to me!"

CHAPTER IV

"Here I disclaim all my paternal care, propinquity and property of blood, and as a stranger to my heart and me, hold thee for this for ever."

With a cry, Constance's father stoops and drags her from the ground. "Get into the carriage," he cries, his eyes blazing with passion, his hand uplifted. "Get into the carriage, lest I forget myself and strike you."

"Father!"

"James, a policeman, at once. Give this besotted man in charge."

"Father, it is Norman—Norman Leigh."

"Norman Leigh! You are raving mad on this lover of yours. Has your brain been turned that you fancy such a debauched, drunken brute is Norman Leigh? Is this the return of the wanderer your wretched mind has been working upon? Is this how you expected to find him, besotted and drunken, sleeping off his last carouse to gain energy for a fresh one?"

"He is wounded." "Wounded. Bah! the air reeks of brandy. Get back into the carriage, I say, and you too," he rages, turning upon his shrinking wife. "Get back; this scene will make us the laughing-stock of London to-morrow. Constance, do you hear me?"

"And leave him, my affianced husband, here? Never!"

Again he lifts his clenched fist, and it half descends ere his wife catches him by the sleeve. "Be it Norman Leigh or not," he says, his voice trembling with passion, "is it your place to descend into the abyss, to the depth of which he has fallen? You forget your womanhood, forget you are my daughter. Were you his sweetheart or something worse that you would follow him to this?"

With a gasp the girl staggers as if the clenched fist had struck her.

"Will you come?"

"Never! You, and you alone, have made it impossible. Nothing can pardon what you have said."

"Then stay. Get in!" he cries fiercely to the trembling woman with her arms outstretched towards her daughter. "Get in, you shall never see her face again. She is out-cast, disgraced, tied to the lowest of the low, and may my curse bring her to such depths as her lover now lies in, may she beg her bread at my door, come crying for a crust that I may refuse it. Home—you hear me—home."

With the last words of her father ringing in her ears, Constance stands scarcely realising her position, so suddenly has the change been brought about.

A few minutes back, and her whole desire had been "would that Norman might return!" and now he lay before her in rags, and worse than that, in deepest degradation.

She looks upon him as he lies, looks upon him with love and loathing, and then instinctively draws her skirts around her, and a hard, hysterical laugh bursts from her lips, as at last she realises the grim irony of the situation—a girl in a silken dress and opera cloak standing by the inert form of a drunkard. The two thrown together so strangely, the one in the depths of despair, the other with the frivolous



chit-chat of an evening in society yet in her mind, and both friendless, both outcasts in the midst of London. She catches the momentary gleam of the red side-light as the carriage turns the corner of the square, and then silence, and they are alone.

"Norman," she whispers, "Norman, don't you know me?" The first thrill of surprise has passed away, and she now speaks in a voice which seems to her to come from someone far away, a voice in which she has no part or interest. A dead feeling of numb despair is settling down upon her, and she feels as one watching a dramatic incident, a strong situation between a man and a woman, but only as an interested spectator—one who cannot interfere.

"Norman, Norman, speak to me, I am Constance!" The old name, the familiar voice, have some effect upon the wreck. He rises to his knees, and, throwing his long hair from his forehead, passes his hand across his brow.

"Norman, Norman!" she cries once more. "It is I, Constance!"

The look of mystery passes away, the old memories struggling for light fall back defeated, and only the Professor is left.

"It is I, Constance!" he mimics with drunken gravity, "and I, Constance, is a dented fine-looking girl! Get me some brandy, there's a dear, and then I'll see you home. London is not the place for a girl to wander about in alone," he continues in a severely madman tone, "but I will look after you. You shall be the Goddess of Reason, we will initiate our neighbours, and, as when they asserted themselves, choose our own ideals, our own goddesses, and they shall be honoured throughout the world. I, whom they call the Professor, shall lead the people, lead them in one mass until they are irresistible, until they have overthrown the iniquitous Government, scattered the parasites which suck the blood of those who toil; and you, Constance, shall be always by my side, you shall be held up and worshipped by my people, you the Goddess of Reason and Knowledge, the Goddess of Socialism!"

A quick step is coming nearer round the square, a sharp step punctuated by the regular snap of a thick oak walking-stick striking the pavement, and Constance knows not whether to stay or fly.

She has found Norman at last, and found him demented; a miserable drunkard, a raver and babbler, a half-witted stirrer up of the people. Every womanly instinct urges her to go, to leave the place and forget; but with it all she cannot. There is one bright spot; she feels Norman's words are those of a madman—fearful words, but not so horrible in the mind of the girl, as those of a drunkard.

Like a flash the remembrance of his early years flies through her mind—his hardships, his lonely journeys, the attempts upon his life, and that great gash upon his forehead. "He has been thrown in my path now," she thinks, "that I may save him, it is too late; that I may care for him and nurse him back until he becomes the Norman of old, and shall I, which because the task is not an easy one? I have meant that Norman should come back, and I have found him, and still never leave him."

The man rises to his feet, and sways from side to side as he wildly gesticulates. "The kingdoms of the earth," he cries, "already totter, and are on the verge of falling; the people, the masses, call for a leader, one who will dare death, one who will carry them to the very cannon's mouth and die, if needs be, at the call of duty. They have waited and waited for this man, and now he is here! Let them follow me, let them follow me, the Professor, as I lead them hand in hand with our Goddess; with our Spirit of Reason, who shall wave us on to victory, clothed in her beauty and unity. Constance, a kiss to seal the compact. Reason and Power shall kiss and lead the people."

She shudders back in terror, as he clutches her arm, and clinging for support, attempts to draw her to him.

A kiss, incarnation of beauty, a kiss from lips that drive men frantic.

She struggles, and gapes in horror at the wildly sensual-looking face approaching hers, and then as her whole pent-up emotions find vent in one wild shriek, she feels herself suddenly loosened, and hears a heavy thud as a body strikes the ground.

Another arm has enfolded her as she was about to fall, and the Professor lies at her feet, muttering as he attempts to rise.

"Life there, you drunken blackguard," a deep voice cries. "Life there, or I'll disgrace my cloth by knocking you down again."

She raises her eyes to see a sturdily-built man, dressed in the conventional clerical garb, with one fist clenched, glowering upon her assailant; and then suddenly realising that his other arm is around her waist, gently disengages herself and stands with downcast eyes before him.

"Who are you calling blackguard, you smug, sneaking sky-pilot? Why don't you go down among the people, in the alms, instead of prowling round West-end squares? I know you parsons; you're a fine lot!"

"If you don't get out of this square in one minute I'll thrash you within an inch of your life. Now then, you understand—go!" He stands erect, firm, and dignified, and the weaker man collapses; he painfully shambles to his feet, and sways awkwardly from side to side, muttering to himself.

"You will allow me to accompany you," the new-comer says, turning to Constance. "My name is James Sterling, and I was on my way to my East-end parish, when I heard your cry. Your home is doubtless near by," he continues after a pause, with a glance at her dress.



The girl trembles violently. Her task is even harder than she realised, and here at the very outset, when she feels she has found a friend, what can she say?

"Shall I give that fellow in charge?" he says, noticing her glance at the man, now seated on the edge of the pavement with every spark of spirit gone.

"No, no," she gasps, "you cannot do anything, thank you; leave me, please."

"Leave you?"

"Yes."

"I cannot, alone with this man. I should be a disgrace to my calling."

"Please leave me."

"No," he says sharply. The Rev. James Sterling is a man of determination, and begins to assert himself. "I will not leave a lady, even at her own request, in such a position. You must allow me to see you to your home."

"I have no home."

"No home!" he cries in astonishment; he has met many an outcast, but never such a one as this. "No home!"

"None," she answers quietly, "and wherever this man goes I must go also. We are both outcasts."

With keen perception, this broad, muscular-looking Christian gains an inkling of the position. "You will wait here," he answers softly, "for one moment only, and I will fetch a cab," and then strides off to hide the working of his features.

A few moments and he is back. "Get inside," he says to the Professor, who meekly obeys, and then assisting Constance, he goes to take a seat upon the box.

"Where are you going?"

"Home."

"But I have none."

"You have a home waiting for you, for to-night, at least. To-morrow you will be able to consider your position more calmly, and, if you wish it, find confidantes and advisers in my mother and myself," and in answer to her appealing glance, he takes a seat in the cab beside her.

The Rectory of St. David's-in-the-East was an old-fashioned, hideous, barnlike mansion, built many years ago by an incumbent who, being plentifully supplied with blessings in the shape of a phenomenally large family, evidently imagined that each successor would be equally enriched, and so provided accommodation sufficient for the quartering of half a regiment. Shut in completely by a high brick wall, only the top storey could be seen from the street, a top storey pierced at intervals by alights of windows, bare and curtainless, and as inviting as a county lunatic asylum. In the hands of a millionaire, who had taken a violent fancy to lower life in London, it would have been a boom, but in the possession of the Rev. James Sterling, whose salary, as shepherd of the flock of black sheep in the vicinity, only permitted him to furnish the few rooms absolutely required by his mother and himself, it was an elephantine load of anxiety, and stood an everlasting monument to the folly of its builder.

But its garden! The house was erected in the days when ground was cheap, and over half an acre of land spread out at its rear, a score of trees threw a delightful shade, and flowers blossomed and struggled with their fragrance against the scents of multifarious soapworks and factories in the neighbourhood. What an oasis in the dreary desert of East London! What a delicious spot for open-air meetings, for sports, and Saturday afternoon assemblies, with the parson, as the preacher on one occasion and the umpire in the boys' games on the other. What a formidable rival on sultry summer evenings to the foul, stifling interior of the "Red Lion," and other unnatural phenomena!

A week has passed since Norman Leigh was found, and Constance is sitting on a rustic seat beneath one of the trees in the old garden. By her side a motherly-looking old lady is knitting, and the Rev. James Sterling, with his arms behind him, and a most unclerical briar in the corner of his mouth, paces the gravel walk.

"I have had a letter from my father in answer to my own," Constance says at last, and her companions glance at one another in silent sympathy.

"He returns my letter, and there is pencilled on it: 'I find I am legally compelled to send you your allowance; it will be paid quarterly wherever you write to my solicitors to fix.' That is all. I must leave you," the girl continues, "you have been so good to a stranger, I cannot trespass upon your hospitality longer. I must work for my living."

"Nonsense, my dear," the lady answers, "nonsense. You are not going to leave us yet awhile; and as to working, you know little of what work in London is to suggest it—besides, this money—"

"I cannot, will not, touch it," she answers indignantly, starting to her feet. "I shall not starve, I shall not sit down and mope and weep, because a man who has ever been harsh casts me off. If there is work for me in England I will find it, but touch this money—"

"Is it your father who is giving it?"

"No, it is mine, left to me by an aunt. I know as well as he does he cannot hold it back."

"Then take it, child, take it. It's your own."

"What do you think?" the girl asks, turning to the Rev. James Sterling. She has got accustomed even in so short a time to look to this strong-minded man for advice.

"Do you think I ought to?"

"You speak of work," he says quietly; "you have taken upon yourself as great a work as ever a woman had to do, the money is yours by law, by right; it would be a crime to waste it by letting it lie idle when so much good could be done with it. Take it, and what you do not absolutely need for your own use, spend for the good of others. There

are a score of people in this parish who need not wither away and die if they could have what that money could bring. Take it. It is the money lying idle, the money accumulating and doubling and doubling itself again out of the sheer avariciousness of those in whose hands it has been placed that has caused half the misery of the world."

"Very well, then, I will do so," she says, looking trustfully into his face, "I will take it and use it as you say."

Further conversation is hushed, as a shaky figure shambles towards them and the Rector's face twitches as he catches sight of it. His heart throbs violently, he has learnt the story of the man, the sacrifice of the woman. Try to do his duty as he will, he loathes the man; and, fight the feeling down with all his strength, grapple and grapple with it as he will, he already loves the woman.

The Professor rushes towards him as he stands, and flinging himself upon his knees, clutches his hand.

"Parson, Parson," he cries, ignoring the two women, "Parson, you're murdering me. Let me go away from here, or cease to torture me."

"Get up," the Rector says sternly, and then softly aside to his mother. "Take her away, this is not a sight for her; leave us together."

Another struggle, only one of the many which has taken place during the last few days, has come about. The man of healthy will and determination has to fight the sickly craving of the confirmed drunkard. To reduce him as a child to submission, to help him to climb the slippery road to sobriety, to regain his strength and manliness—for what?

The man for whom Constance would give her very life, the man who would give his life for her to stand face to face.

"Parson."

"Well?"

They are both cool now. It is the way it always commences. The one stern, pale and unflinching, the other whining, coaxing and sneakily civil.

"You went to college, didn't you?"

"Well?"

"Didn't you learn anything about Tantalus there? The man starving with food at his lips, dying of thirst with luscious fruit before his eyes? Did you feel any pity for him, Parson? No, I don't suppose you did; you looked on it as I did, just a little bit of interesting reading to develop your mind."

"What of this?"

"What of it?" cries the Professor, maddened by the other's coldness. "This. Who set you a ruler and a judge over me? Who placed you in the position to deal with my life? To treat me as a modern Tantalus. Who did it, I say, who did it? Brandy is my food, brandy is my drink, brandy is my life, and you in your callousness place me where from my window I can see it, and yet imprison me from it. Enough of it, I say. Where is your right to keep me here? Let me go, or—"

"Or what?"

"Or kill me now."

"Are you a man or a beast; have you no courage, no strength, no pluck? Can't you fight down your vile desires? I have told you before, and I tell you again, you shall not have a single drop."

"Then may you be everlastingly—"

"Man, man," cries Sterling, seizing him by the shoulders, "have you no mind, no soul?"

"Let go of me, let go, I tell you! Keep that cant for the miserable crew you're piloting. Give me brandy, and I'll take my chance of Heaven and all the rest of it."

"Give you brandy? I'd as soon give a madman a knife."

"A knife," he shrieks with an insane chuckle. "Well reminded, Parson. Let me get hold of one and then we'll see if you can bully so loudly. The most wideawake gaoler can be eluded. You have been keeping a sharp look-out on me lately, but it can't last. Your lambs will be bleating for you soon, and then give me a knife and I'll get free if I have to—"

"Stop, stop! I tell you you'll never be left alone until your manliness has asserted itself."

"I don't want to be," he says in sudden dejection, collapsing beneath the very hands of the Rector. "I don't want to be. When I'm alone every horror comes upon me. I am haunted by hopelessness that nothing can alleviate."

Sterling releases his grasp and places his hand upon the wretched man's arm. "Norman Leigh," he says sharply, and his companion looks up wonderingly.

"Eh?"

"Don't you know your own name?"

"My name? Oh, yes. They call me the Professor," he replies, and shuffles moodily away.

CHAPTER V.

Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of passions contending.

"Poor fellow," the Rev. James Sterling mutters as he sits over the fire in his study. "Poor girl," and there is a great deal more emphasis, infinitely more pathos in the last expression. "And so, months ago, they were engaged to be married. Then he disappeared, and she found him as he is now, a drunkard—a half-demented man, with no thought but for the brandy bottle, no ideas except the few ravings that cunning minds had put into his head—put into his head because he, an educated man, is a clever mouthpiece for their illiterate tongues. And she, Constance, what of her? For this man, this half-crazed being who has no thought of anything, she has sacrificed all. Ah, it is the way of the world."

As he impatiently shrugs his shoulders, his bitter reflections translated would have read: "A woman will always sacrifice all for the one who counts it nothing, but to

are a score of people in this parish who need not wither away and die if they could have what that money could bring. Take it. It is the money lying idle, the money accumulating and doubling and doubling itself again out of the sheer avariciousness of those in whose hands it has been placed that has caused half the misery of the world."

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the man who would willingly yield up his life for her, she never deigns to give a passing thought."

He rises and nervously paces his study. After all, who is this man that he should so strive to reclaim him? What will happen if he does his duty? What will happen if he goes through with the task that has been set before him, reclaims the man and makes him as he was before? He laughs scornfully, he knows what will happen. They will marry, he will take her away and they will forget all the past; it will be nothing but an ugly dream. Norman Leigh will perhaps think with a little gratitude of the man who taught him to regain his lost manhood, never realising what he once was, and Constance will perhaps sometime think of the hard-working Rector of an East-end parish, who helped her in her need—and that is all.

He pauses before the fire and gazes with a moody look into the glowing embers. So then this was his task. It was for this that he had striven and struggled through all his life to do his duty, that he might have yet another burden, a more terrible trial put upon him.

What use to strive, and strive to do his best, when each temptation was to be more difficult to resist than the one before it? What were the petty little trials that he had thought so much of in the past compared with this? He had now by his own efforts to make the man whom Constance loved worthy of her. His duty was to help another man to win the woman he himself yearned for.

Why should he? Why, because he had taken the cloth and professed, should he subjugate all human passions? It was too cruel a task, too hard a burden. Why should he bear it?

"Why," he groans, "should he who had given his life to the best work to which a man can devote himself be faced with crueler temptations than one who had done nothing?"

She was all the world to him, he owned it in those silent conflicts, in these fearful struggles, then why should he not hold what had been given to him? He loved her, he would dedicate his whole life to making her happy, and yet it was ordained that he should lift another man out of the abyss into which he had fallen, bring him back to what he once was, and cry: "Take her, take the only woman in the world for whom I have ever cared, and be happy."

And yet, why should he? A voice seems to whisper—an insinuating voice that had become his daily companion. Why should he? Why, because he taught manhood, should he cease to be a man? What had Norman Leigh done for him that he should give up all he held dear in life for him? Who would know if he relaxed his care, if he allowed Norman to follow the path that he himself had chosen—allowed him to escape and rejoin those riotous companions who would take care that they kept him down to their own level? "Let him go," the voice whispers. "Let him go back to those who will keep him from respectability, and Constance is yours. Of course for a time she will be disconsolate, but it can only be for a time, and then you will have your desire."

So James Sterling fights and struggles, fights and struggles and is almost giving way, when it seems to him Providence comes to his assistance.

"Oscar Shephworth," he says dubiously, as he looks at a somewhat crumpled card, "h'm, very well, show him in."

He anticipates the arrival of a visitor of his usual class. One dirty and tattered, who will beseech temporary assistance, and starts with amazement as a well-built young man enters the room and, taking a seat, carelessly crosses his legs and gazes quizzingly at him.

"Quite safe from interruption, Mr. Sterling?" his visitor hazards.

"Quite," he replies, awaiting events.

"Well then we can talk as men of business."

The Rev. James Sterling nods his head, and his visitor continues.

"You remember the big row up Tanner Street way a little while ago—distillery wrecked and all that kind of thing, eh? Very well, I saw a bit of that, and I saw the ringleader, the man they're looking for now."

James Sterling cannot suppress a feeling of elation as he thinks that perhaps now his difficulty is to be removed, but his features show no trace of his thoughts as he gazes inquiringly at his visitor and calmly remarks:

"How does that concern me?"

"In this way," Shephworth answers with a smile. "I saw you bring him in and I know he is in this house now."

"And you want to know what I will pay for your secrecy?"

"Not at all; it's nothing to do with me. I know you're very fond of this reclaiming game. I don't want to round on the poor wretch, but it occurred to me he might be a troublesome customer to deal with, or to leave in the house alone when you were obliged to go out, and that you might be willing to pay for an assistant, that's all. If you don't want anyone, I'll get out. You can trust me not to give the game away, although it is a felony to harbour a criminal."

There is a ring of sincerity in the man's tone, and, eye him closely as he will, James Sterling is unable to discover anything deceitful about his visitor. He looks him fairly and squarely in the face as he speaks, and he seems to be in want of nothing but an easy situation.

After all, he thinks, why should he not make use of this man, who, it seems, has been sent to him to prevent backsliding? If Shephworth is by to look after Norman Leigh, there will be no need for him to exercise such vigilance. He can live his life more apart from temptation, and seek to forget this incident until he can look back upon it quite calmly. Oscar Shephworth has come at the

very height of his temptation, and he will not despise him. And so Oscar Shephworth, the head of one of the most determined anarchist cliques in Europe, and Norman Leigh's worst enemy, is appointed keeper of the very man whom he had selected for his tool in a plot that was to shake Europe to its foundations.

There was to be a gathering of the Royalty of Europe in the capital of England, and the Red Circle had determined that Europe should be appalled. Europe should stand aghast and tremble, and be cast into mourning. The Red Circle, a mixture of the most desperate men and fanatics of Republicans, Revolutionists, and Nihilists had determined that in London, at the supreme moment of the rejoicings, the great blow should be struck, and had drawn lots for the one who should be honoured by being allowed to cast that shell which meant death to him who threw it, death to all around, and universal mourning to Europe.

To Oscar Shephworth, the man who had been the most ready in his revivings of the powers that be, the lot had fallen, and each member of the Circle rejoiced, because where could there be found a man more fitted for the work than Shephworth? Rejoiced greatly because the lot had not fallen upon himself.

Only once in his life had Shephworth done a good action without premeditating some advantage to himself, the saving of Norman Leigh upon the Windsor Road, and that deed for him had turned out in a manner that no organised scheme could have done.

He found the man helpless, wounded, and alone, dying upon the roadside, helped him, and Norman became his slave, because a part of Shephworth himself—his willing agent, his ready tool. Whatever Shephworth willed he obeyed as law, and so in his attempts to stir up the people, in his efforts to rouse sedition and rebellion, it was Norman Leigh who spoke, Norman Leigh who ran all risks, and Oscar Shephworth who supplied the thoughts, who made him captive of his own will, slave to him and the brandy bottle. It was Oscar Shephworth who was his master, his devil to lead him to destruction, and, irony of fate, his master, appointed by one who had fought with temptation, fought and won, and decided that he would save him.

There is a gleam of recognition in Norman Leigh's eyes when Oscar Shephworth and James Sterling enter his room, but with the cunning of a drunkard he says nothing until he and Shephworth are left alone, and then in a moment he is by his side.

"Give me something to drink," he gasps. "Take me from here! Say you will not leave me, Shephworth!"

"Sit down, you fool; what are you kicking up this row about?" the man replies pushing him into a chair. "You bet your life I won't leave you now I've once got hold of you. Here you are, take a drop of this and pull yourself together."

With a frenzied grasp Norman Leigh clutches the proffered flask, and half draining it, sinks back with a grunt of satisfaction.

"Ah!" he gasps. "It puts new life into one. Now tell me, Shephworth: tell me what shall I do? Shall I go and talk to the people? Shall I stir their sluggish blood, or is it time to do the deed—to throw the shell? Ah, how I long for it; have you made it yet? Tell me, you can trust me. I know my part. I am to creep forward with the silver ball in my pocket, and, as the State carriages reach the opera-house, throw it. Ha! What a sight; what a lovely sight! Chaos and desolation everywhere. I'm a man again. Give me the flask."

"You've had enough."

"Give me the flask, give me brandy, or I won't throw the shell."

"You'll throw the shell right enough," Shephworth sharply cries, glancing into his face, and Norman Leigh gazes blankly into his eyes, and uneasily shifts his feet, while his fingers clench convulsively. "You must throw it. I tell you, you must."

"Of course, Shephworth, of course I will. Yes; now don't quarrel, let's be friends. I'll throw it. Give me the flask."

"Here you are, drink it down; you won't have many more opportunities with your smug-faced parson always watching you."

"Bah! He's always spying," Norman answers. "Always spying on me. I'll go away with you, Shephworth; go away and leave. No I won't," he mutters to himself, "because of Constance. I like Constance, only she looks at me so—"

"Who's Constance?"

"I don't know, but I seem to have met her before—long ago, I don't know when. It worries me. Ah, never mind; give me brandy, and then I can forget everyone."

Forget everyone! What could be better for Oscar Shephworth? Again he hands the flask, and when he leaves Norman Leigh for the night he leaves him in a maudlin, drunken sleep, prating of revolutions, murmuring of the downfall of kingdoms, and chuckling at the devastation which is to be wrought by that shell which he will throw.

To James Sterling the next few weeks pass happily enough. He has done his duty. He has struggled to put aside all thought of Constance, and, in the troubles and worries of a poor parish, has almost succeeded. There seems never a moment of his life to call his own, never a moment to indulge in his own thoughts, and he is thankful. He rejoices in the fact that Norman has ceased begging him to give him brandy, rejoices, too, in the thought that in the Apollo-like Shephworth he has found a man to be trusted, a man who is exerting such an influence over Norman Leigh that he is almost cured of his craving until he discovers all—returns early one evening unexpectedly, and overhears Shephworth goading Norman Leigh for the deed which has been arranged for him, carousing with him, and drinking

to the downfall of kings, to the uplifting of Anarchy and Sedition.

Then when Norman Leigh has fallen into his nightly insensibility the two men face each other.

James Sterling white and stern, with a determined look upon his face, and Oscar Shephworth sneeringly defiant. For a moment they gaze unflinchingly in each other's eyes and then Sterling fiercely motions Shephworth to a seat.

"Yes, I guess you're right," he remarks lightly, as he takes an easy chair. "We'd better discuss the matter calmly. Who knows but what we may come to some mutual understanding."

"I come to no understanding with a scoundrel, a black-guard who has betrayed a solemn trust, who has goaded a wretched being to glory in anarchy, to rejoice in the awful fact that he is to be the instrument of murder, of wholesale slaughter, who has damned his soul by giving him what he knew meant destruction."

"That's enough of it, Parson, save that rot for the pulpit. The man you unlawfully keep imprisoned is an old friend of mine, and I've stuck by him, that's all; and what's more I'm going to stick to him. He'll be useful to me, and I shall take him with me when I leave."

"You'll never leave this house, until you change it for a prison," James Sterling says, locking the door and gazing resolutely at the man who smiles a soft smile of contempt. "I know you now, Oscar Shephworth, anarchist. I have heard enough to-night to show you in your true colours. A butler, a slaughterer, a murderer of innocent people, a fiend incarnate, who will compass the death of a pleasure-seeking crowd because of his spite against law and order."

"Tush! The mere babblings of your confirmed drunkard. One must humour a fool according to his folly."

"You're a liar, Oscar Shephworth. Do you think I have not heard the rumours of what is to be done when the rejoicings are at their height? Do you think I do not know that the English and Continental police are searching London for you, the ringleader? What a poor, miserable liar you are. It was clever to conceal yourself in the shelter of my house while you worked out your fiendish plots, but it is useless. You are unmasked, and I shall give you up to the authorities now."

The anarchist shrugs his shoulders contemptuously, and devotes his whole attention to rolling a cigarette between his fingers.

"It's a pity we can't come to an arrangement, Parson," he says at last, "after all, what suits me suits you. Let's be partners."

James Sterling does not deign to reply, but, keeping a sharp look-out upon his visitor, scribbles a note, and hands it with a few whispered words to the servant, who comes in answer to his ring.

"That's for the police, of course," Shephworth quietly remarks. "Well, it's a pity, Parson, it's ten minutes' walk to the station, and it's all for nothing, because when they do come, you will tell them I'm not here."

"Resistance is useless, Oscar Shephworth; well-built as you are, excess has ruined your constitution. To leave this room while I guard the door is impossible."

"I'm not going to leave, I shall be here when the police come, but you will say I'm not. You'll go out and lie to them, Parson, that's what you'll do, in spite of your Christian conscience."

He rises to his feet and walks towards Sterling.

"Reverend James Sterling, you'll lie for me and then you'll marry the woman to whom your drunken guest is engaged, the woman whom you love."

"You fiend!"

"Ha, you see we work together, after all. Give me Leigh, and in return I'll give you Constance. You thought you kept your secret very well, perhaps, but not so well but what I could fathom it. You will tell the police I have escaped, eh? Get rid of your troublesome visitor, your besotted protégé, and then bask in the smiles of the virtuous Constance."

"If you mention her name again," Sterling cries, white to the lips with rage, "I'll kill you. You cur, you miserable, malicious cur. So you judge me by your own villainous standard. You think to trade a man's soul with me for a woman whom I could not dare to look in the face after the wrong I had done her. You, in your mean, miserable, paltry manhood, thought it would be a temptation to hold up a pure woman before my eyes, and say: 'Damn your soul for her.' You fool, oh, you fool in your petty cunning! You could not see that it was no temptation to me. You could not see from your despicable point of view that I had fought the fight and won a victory over self, long, long ago, and so you put before me the foulest plot man ever conceived, and say: 'Agree with me and I will give you this'—come like the tempting devil that you are, and show me the riches of a promised land. Can't you see that what you propose now I could have done myself before you came, had I been base enough. With you from his path Norman Leigh may yet be reclaimed, and I will do it. I swear it—so help me Heaven!"

"Much better marry—"

"Silence!"

At last Shephworth's apparent unconcern has deserted him and he gazes nervously round the room.

"You still intend to give me up?"

Sterling does not deign to reply.

"Think for yourself, Parson, think for your skin, think for your life. The game is up, and I confess. I am the chief mover in the Red Circle, the band that has sworn a solemn vow to overthrow the thrones of Europe."

"Poor fools—poor, wretched fools!"

"Poor fools," you sneer. Fools or not, mine was the chosen hand to make the grand attack, and I had decided that Leigh should be my tool."

"I wish to hear no more."

"But you shall. You have discovered me, and you will give me up, hand me to the police to-night. If you do, mark yourself as doomed. How long do you think the Red Circle will let my betrayal go unavenged? How long before London hears of the Rector of St. David's being

found dead with the assassin's knife buried between his shoulders? That is how we treat a betrayer. If you give me up, in a week you will be dead. Now then, will you lie to the police, eh?"

"No."

"What?"

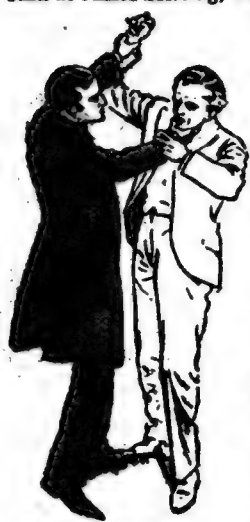
"No."

"You're mad! You think I boast, you think I am spreading a ghastly tale to frighten you. Let me help your memory. Do you recollect the man found dead in Sackville Street, Piccadilly, stabbed to the heart with a red-handled knife, and another in Manchester last week? Ah, you do; I see it in your face. If I am taken to-night you will be the next. Will you lie to the police?"

"If I die a thousand deaths I will not let such a miscreant loose upon the world."

"Then, damn you, take that."

Like a flash Shepworth bounds from his seat and makes a rush at James Sterling, who meets his attack with the skill and quickness of a trained athlete.



With one hand he grips his assailant by the throat, and with the other holds his wrist high above his head, and the long, thin dagger well out of reach.

"I have been waiting for this, Oscar Shepworth; I thought murder would be your last move," he says, as he crushes the man's knuckles against the wall, and forces him to drop the knife—a knife with a red handle; he winces as he eyes it.

"Let go of me, curse you, you'll strangle me."

"I'll let go when others are here to take you—come in—it's all right; burst open the door; it's locked."

There is silence for a moment, and then a thud and a crash as the lock breaks, and a sergeant followed by several policemen enter the room.

"The very man we've hunted London for," the sergeant cries, with a start. "You're not hurt, sir?"

"No, I'm all right; take him away."

In another minute Oscar Shepworth, handcuffed and surrounded by the police, leaves the room.

James Sterling, with a shudder, picks up that red-handled dagger, and stands gazing at it with an unaccountable fascination. Then Shepworth, liar and scoundrel that he was, had spoken the truth so far. He was a member of the notorious Red Circle—perhaps, as he had sworn, its head. Well, the law would deal with him. And now Sterling's duty was harder than ever; he must devote himself, heart and soul, to undo the mischief that Shepworth had wrought in Norman Leigh. He must break him from that curse of drink that Shepworth had insidiously fostered, and must make him a man once more, and then—then—when he could trust Norman Leigh thoroughly, he must give into his keeping the dearest being in the whole wide world—Constance; Constance, to keep him steadfast in the good path, and go back alone to fight the battle of life amongst the poor and wretched of his parish.

CHAPTER VI.

"Let them be happy! And if grief must come once more upon them, as it comes to all, fill up the interval with pure delights."

THE season at Ventnor is at its height, and the pretty little town is overflowing with visitors who lounge in the sunlight and try and forget in the brilliancy of the morning that presently the night will be upon them and they will all heartily wish they were back in London.

For Ventnor, like so many of its neighbours, is quite contented with the idyllic setting that Nature has given it, and seeks in no way to add to the enjoyment of its guests. There are the views of the island to admire until the sun sets, but when night has fallen one must either go to bed or go melancholy mad, according to one's mood.

It is Nature's convalescent home for the invalid, but for the healthy individual, who perhaps has an inclination for an occasional night of wild dissipation at a most select concert or theatre, a failure.

James Sterling, no longer willing to trust to his own opinions, had taken Norman Leigh to a specialist on brain disorders, who had suggested that a month or so of the placid calm of Ventnor would do more than anything to quiet Norman's brain and nerves, and then he would see him again and find if anything could be done.

"He had known such cases," he asserted, "and when the cure came, if it ever did come, Norman Leigh would resume his life as if there had been no break. The whole period which had elapsed while his brain had been disordered would be a blank, a sheet torn from his life, the contents of which he would never know."

"But what would cure him, what would bring back his brain to healthy active life again?" Sterling had impetuously asked; and the great specialist had gravely shaken his head.

"Who could say what would happen where the brain was concerned; who could tell how Leigh's reason would return, if return it ever did? Perhaps gradually, perhaps as a sudden shock. A chance word, and face once well-known, a voice, a view, might do it, it might happen to-morrow, it might never happen at all. But, before all things, the man must be weaned from his craving for spirits."

"Those who had given brandy to a man whose brain was almost gone," he continued, "were morally murderers. To refuse him the brandy now would be to complete the deed."

It must be taken away little by little day after day, until it could be stopped altogether, and then they would all hope for the best," and the eminent man took his extravagant fee with the air of one who had earned it with the sweat of his brow.

With but little difficulty James Sterling had succeeded in changing for a couple of months with a Ventnor clergyman, who, knowing nothing of the villainess of the East-end of London, was filled with quixotic plans for its conversion in sixty days, and now for three weeks they had been installed in a delightful vicarage in the Bonchurch Road.

A tiny house standing in its own grounds, with a view of the Channel from almost every window. A view that caused James Sterling, so used to the grimy East-end of London, to take deep breaths of delight each time he gazed at it, while his *locum tenens* at St. David's grew more depressed and more disheartened every day, as he realised how utterly useless his Utopian fancies were for dealing with the grim and naked sins of the East-end.

James Sterling was an exponent of the church militant, and well some of the young roughs of the Parish of St. David's knew that strong, right arm; but the man who took his place followed only the theory of the soft answer, which, as far as turning away wrath went, was, in that part of the world, a miserable failure, and so he brooded over the collapse of his schemes, and longed for the end of the two months when he could return to his country parishioners, who, if they were a little dull, were always most polite, and held the cloth in almost sacred reverence.

James Sterling is strolling with Constance and Norman Leigh upon the pier, and feels supremely contented, because he tells himself things are going well. He has quite persuaded himself now that Constance is nothing to him, but he feels a secret elation in the thought that if he can restore Norman she will ever think of him with gratitude, and already Norman is looking better.

How he wishes those wretched thoughts of what might have been would not be always coming into his mind. It was unworthy. Constance loved Norman, and they were his dearest friends. What a discontented fellow he was not to feel perfectly happy. And yet—

Yes, there was no doubt Norman was improving; his eye was brighter, his face clearer and already bronzed by the sun, but what was more encouraging than all, he had accepted Sterling as his friend. Shepworth was forgotten. It was Sterling to whom he appealed in that helpless, pathetic manner of his when things went wrong. It was to Sterling's hand he would resign the glass when he put his hand on his shoulder.

Norman was becoming another man, there was no doubt about it. Morally and physically mending in those delicious, health-giving breezes of England's Garden.

But what a little thing amused him! It was pitiful to watch his childish interest in trifles. His infantile delight in anything that pleased for the moment.

To Constance he scarcely ever seemed to give a thought. Sometimes, but only very rarely, he would gaze at her intently, so intently that it seemed to them his flickering intellect was about to be restored, but then some insignificant matter would attract his notice and all would be forgotten.

"I don't understand Constance," he had said confidently to Sterling. "I don't think I like her very much; she seems to worry me, my head aches when I try to think about her." And so it had been arranged that Constance should see as little of him as possible while his poor, struggling brain attempted to assert itself.

The strains of music from the esplanade, mellowed by the distance, come floating out upon the breeze, as they seat themselves upon the pier and listen. Constance gazing with a far-away look in her eyes at the glorious cliffs and green slopes towards St. Catherine's, and Norman Leigh watching with deepest interest the frolics of a couple of children. A little bright-faced girl in white and a boy of three or four enjoying, as children only can, that holiday by the sea.

Suddenly there is a babyish shriek, the boy stands alone upon the pier, and a tiny white dress floats for a moment on the sea, and then slowly disappears as the waves close over it.

Norman Leigh puts his hands before his eyes as if the sight had been too terrible for his weakened brain, and then before James Sterling can place a restraining hand upon him, he is standing on the seat with one foot upon the rail. Then he casts his hat away, throws off his coat, for a fraction of a second stands poised upon the iron railing, and like an arrow from a bow, dives.

A splendid dive, he takes the water almost without a splash, just above where the white dress, now like a faint gleam beneath the waves, sank, and in a moment reappears with something in his arms.

The swim to one of the iron supports of the pier is only a few yards, but he ignores them, and turns towards the beach.

"He will be drowned," Constance gasps, as she clings to Sterling's arm.

"No, no, he's all right; see, one of the boats has reached him now," he replies, and then his look changes to one of amazement as he sees Norman hand his burden to one of the boatmen, and with a remark which he cannot catch, but which raises a laugh in the boat, roll over and with a clean side-stroke, keep level with the boat as it makes towards the beach.

They join the frightened crowd that rushes down the

pier and then stand by the water's edge, stand waiting to receive the hero, the man who dives from the pier-head to effect a rescue, and then heedless of the weight of his clothes, comes swimming ashore as one who does such things for pleasure.

Norman Leigh swims to within his depth, and then taking to his feet walks through the enthusiastic crowd which struggles for the honour of clasping him by the hand, and stands bewildered on the shore, with his hand to his forehead, gazing at the people.

Suddenly he catches sight of a girl, hesitating whether to advance or retire, and with a cry of delight he rushes towards her.

"Constance," he cries. "Constance! Where are we, where is the lock and the boat. I must have fallen into the water. I feel dazed, I—er—" and with a deep sigh of exhaustion he falls back into the arms of James Sterling.

"What does it mean?" Constance cries, as Sterling lifts the man in his arms and carries him through the sympathetic throng. "Tell me, James, what does it mean?"

"Mean?" he answers with a laugh of exultation. "It means that Norman is himself again. That the Professor is dead and Norman Leigh has appeared once more."

That Norman Leigh had recovered his reason was true. That great specialist on brain diseases in the many hazards he had made had hit the mark in one. He had predicted that a sudden shock might restore the man's reason, and that prediction had been verified. It was the triumph of his life, the most splendid advertisement he had ever received. A patient had followed his instructions and by giving himself a severe shock had cured his disease.

For a week Norman Leigh was prostrate. The brain was now too active for the body. It would not keep still, would not rest.

Where was he? How had he got there? and why was Constance there? Where were her people? and before everything, who was that grave-looking man ever so ready and attentive to his slightest needs?

Little by little they told him what they dared, to help him to piece the disorder together. That he had been very ill and was only just recovering, and then by degrees Nature asserted herself, and Norman—the Norman of old—was able to walk again and take a new interest in life. And then came the shock that humiliated the man to the dust, cast him to the ground and left him broken and despairing.

It had seemed to him that somehow he needed more stimulant, more brandy than he had ever drank before. The idea became formed in his mind that even if he were not always drinking he was always desiring to. He put it down to his weakness. It seemed absurd that he, Norman Leigh, should be a slave to drink, until one morning the truth burst upon him. One morning when he awoke to find the sunlight streaming into his room, his lamp still burning, and a brandy bottle upon the table with half a tumblerful of the spirit beside it. A glance at his flushed face and disordered dress made the horrible truth too plain, and with a gasp of horror he rushed into Sterling's room.

"Sterling, what happened last night?"

"You were drunk," he answers, almost brutally it would seem, but he feels that now is not the time for soft words.

"Drunk?"

"Yes, drunk, when I met you in the street, and you've been drinking again in the night."

"It's impossible," Norman gasps.

"It's true."

"Drunk," he whispers with a gasp. "No, no, it must be some horrible dream," and then his head falls forward on his arm and he breaks down altogether. He lays his hand on Sterling's sleeve and raises his head.

"Did she—?" he commences, but his trembling lips can say no more, and James Sterling places his arm about his shoulders.

"Norman," he says, "you've got the roughest time in your life before you. Bear it like a man. You've got to know now that you've humiliated yourself to the dust before the woman you love. No, don't say anything, hear me through quietly. You are blameless. Whatever I tell you must not make you despise yourself, only reverence the woman who has sacrificed all for you. Do you remember Old Windsor lock?"

"Yes, what of that?"

"How long should you say it was since you were there?"

"I don't know," Norman whispers. "You say I have been very ill, perhaps it is a week or two."

"It is nearly twelve months. For almost a year Norman Leigh has been dead, and in his place there has been a half-demented anarchist, whom people called 'the Professor.' A drunkard, a fool, a madman, but a man for whom a woman sacrificed her life, because once he was known as Norman Leigh." Then, with his arm still round Norman's shoulder, James Sterling gives the history of that blank in Norman's life, only omitting his own temptation, his own victory. He sketches the maudlin, repulsive Professor, the sacrifice of Constance, the life in Tanner Street and the time at St. David's, sparing not a detail of the gruesome history, driving each point home, as he feels that now or never will Norman be what he was before he became the tool of Oscar Shepworth, the slave of the brandy bottle, and Norman grows pale and cold as the story is told.

It is over, and they both sit motionless.

"My God! what a history!" Norman gasps, pale as death. "What a life!" He eagerly clutches the other man's arm. "I must go abroad. I dare not face her; I cannot see her again."

"For a year she has waited for your return, and now you would desert her. A fitting reward for her love, her sacrifice!"

"What can I say to her?"

"Nothing. Why should you attempt to shield the drunken, besotted Professor? You don't think she loved



him, do you? Go to her now as Norman—Norman Leigh, her betrothed."

He leads him towards the door, and as he leaves turns back, and, throwing himself into a chair, buries his face in his hands and fights his last battle.

Fights and wins, for as he rises it is with a smile of contentment.

He has one favour to ask of Constance when she expresses her gratitude. The wedding must take place at St. David's.

It is a week later; Constance has retired with Miss Sterling, and James and Norman sit facing one another, both buried in thought.

Suddenly Norman, with the lighthearted laugh of old, brings his fist upon the table, and startles Sterling from his reverie.

"I've got it at last!" he cries, starting to his feet. "It was in Windsor Park they assaulted me, and stole the deeds of my mine. I remember the scoundrels well, Restron and Phillips; we'll catch them yet."

CHAPTER VII.

"I'll example you with thievery."

"In all my experience, Mr. Leigh, I have never, I think, had a more difficult case to deal with," said Edgar Dewsbury, detective, after listening carefully to Norman Leigh's narrative as they sat at the open window facing the sea. There seems so little



to guide one in the matter; many months unfortunately have passed since the dastardly attack upon your life, and the scoundrels have had ample time during your period of unconsciousness to dispose of the property, and escape from the country.

"But do you think that they can have done so?" anxiously asked Norman.

"Well, scarcely, after

all you have told me. They may have done so, but I think that they are too deep rogues to act without some caution. They left you for dead, but luckily you did not die."

"Thank God," softly answered Norman, pressing Constance's hand, as she sits beside him.

"They no doubt watched the papers for any announcement of the discovery of the murder, and hearing nothing may have feared that you recovered, and have as yet hesitated to take any action."

"But supposing Restron, who is a well-educated class of scoundrel, has disposed of the deeds to some syndicate, with the idea of forming a company to work the mine. I know that there is a big boom just now in Nevada properties, and one or two new concerns have of late been floated on the market. Suppose the 'Will o' the Wisp' Mine rechristened should be one of these?"

The detective bit his lip, and leant back thoughtfully in his seat; for a moment he looked annoyed and perplexed, and then a smile of satisfaction flitted across his features.

"No fear of that, Mr. Leigh," he answered. "In the first place, no promoter would alter the name of the mine from that appearing on the original title deeds, because that would destroy any local reputation that the property had gained, and secondly, Messrs. Restron and Phillips would never confess, in carrying out their negotiations for the sale, that they were selling property that there need be any secrecy about, therefore they would not suggest any alteration of the name. No, no, unless any company has been floated under the real name, the mine is safe yet. Still to satisfy myself that no mine in the exact district has been turned into a company, I will examine Somerset House records of all the companies registered since the date you have given me. That will be my first step to-morrow."

"You do not think it has been sold?"

"No, I fancy that they are still waiting to hear some definite news about you, but best of all to learn that you are dead. They may believe that the fearful blow that you received, although it did not kill you, has rendered you insane, and yet fear to act too hurriedly. The mine cannot run away, they hold the deeds, and if you attempted to assert your right to the property, they would simply destroy them."

"Then what steps do you propose to take?"

Edgar Dewsbury relapsed into thought again; it was, he mused, a difficult problem—a very hard knot indeed to untie. Two men—two hardened scoundrels—were somewhere knocking about the world with the title deeds of the "Will o' the Wisp" mine in their possession, and they were probably in London—the safest place on earth to escape recognition or arrest—and up to the present they had not attempted in any way to turn their plunder into capital. At any rate, so far as he knew. There was, of course, the possibility that Phillips and Restron had quarrelled, or that the two of them had left the country and returned at once to the mine believing Norman Leigh dead, and with the title deeds in their possession had justified their right to work it. The first step was to try and discover whether the men had left England or not—but how? That was the trouble.

Suddenly an idea seemed to strike him, and he put this irrelevant question to Norman Leigh:

"Have you any friends in the world; anyone who would care if you were alive or not, or who would be pained to hear of your death?"

"None, except Constance," he answered with a thankful glance at her.

"Then if it were given out you were dead there would be no one who would suffer."

"No one."

"Then look in to-morrow's London papers," was Edgar

Dewsbury's answer, as he shook Norman by the hand. "Good-bye. I must catch the 3.15, but will wire you as soon as I have any news."

"Good-bye. You intend to kill me then?"

"Pro tem. Good-bye." And Edgar Dewsbury strode away to Ventnor station.

The whole of the London newspapers the next day contained the following announcement, under "Deaths."

"LEIGH.—On the 19th inst., Norman Leigh, late of California, from disease of the brain, after many months of suffering, aged 35."

Edgar Dewsbury was right, Restron and Phillips had been waiting. They had feared to return to the mine, they had equally hesitated to endeavour to realise the stolen deeds; the risk in both cases was too great. They had become possessed of a white elephant, and the dread that Norman Leigh was alive, and perhaps sufficiently sane to remember, had held them back.

Day by day they had carefully looked through the papers for an announcement of his death, or for anything that should give them a clue to his whereabouts if still living, but without success. Little did they think that the man they were so anxious to trace had been the notorious Professor of Tanner Street.

Funds were running very low with the two scoundrels, nearly the whole of the money stolen from Norman Leigh on that awful night had gone, and they were beginning to become quarrelsome again, and in proportion to their increasing irritability their caution was diminishing.

"If we don't find out anything about him in another week, I vote you get rid of the papers, Restron, for what they'll fetch, and hand over my half," said Phillips, as the pair of them sat, cursing their luck, in their lodgings.

"Want to clear out of it, do you?" snarled Restron. "Had your patience tired out of you already, eh?" bringing his fist down with a bang on the table. "You leave the job to me. Hurry's a mistake until we can find out something further."

"Nothing in the papers to-day?" inquired Phillips, a little more subdued.

"I've not looked at them yet, but nothing about him, I'll take my oath. Plenty about gold mines and silver mines, and promoting. Plenty of advertisements from gentlemen with abundant capital, desirous of floating mining concerns."

"Then why not risk it. Go and see one of the bounders, tell him we've bought the deeds out there, and want to get rid of the mine and settle down. Where are the advertisements? What do they say?"

"Oh, they're generally on the front pages."

"Well, let's have a look."

Phillips takes the paper and glances down the columns. Suddenly the name of the man they have been talking of catches his eye.

"Look, Restron," he almost shrieks. "Look, look at last! Norman Leigh is dead!" and he points to Edgar Dewsbury's announcement in the "Deaths" column.

"At last! Then in about a week we'll move," and Restron drags a box from beneath the table, and takes from it a few fine samples of ore. "Splendid stuff," he murmurs. "Picked specimens, assays goodness only knows how many ounces to the ton. That ought to sell the mine. Now let's look at the deeds and the plans again."

He spreads them out upon the table, and studies them carefully, making himself thoroughly acquainted with every detail, and then falls to the perusal of other advertisements in the paper, the announcements of those capitalists desirous of acquiring valuable mining properties.

Rogues and scamps though they are, Messrs. Restron and Phillips have yet to learn that the value of properties in the eyes of many of these promoting gentlemen is gauged less by the "specimens" of ore that the fraudulent vendor brings them, than by the glowing terms of the fictitious experts' reports. What though the mine is but a barren hole in the ground? Its value is what the promoter can get out of the pockets of the gullied shareholders. How well these statements read in the prospectus, "so much in cash and so much in shares to show confidence in the undertaking?" Poor, deluded public. They subscribe—and then, well, then the only gold obtained is that extracted from their own pockets, and the inevitable end—liquidation comes.

Yes, there are other ways of robbing people than knocking them down in the street, and clearing out their pockets. Yes, even so much more genteel and polite methods, under the protecting shadow of the Joint Stock Companies' Acts.

A week has elapsed and Messrs. Phillips and Restron are at last ready for action, and, with the deeds and specimens of ore, they make their way, not without a certain amount of nervous foreboding, towards the City.

Mr. Julian Hazard sits in the inner office of his suite of rooms in Queen Victoria Street, and scans the inspired paragraphs of subsidised financial journals, paragraphs which contain volumes of information for those who, like Mr. Hazard, company promoter, stock-rigger, and general agent, have the facility for reading between the lines.

It is an office well calculated to inspire the innocent gudgeon with confidence, to instil in his mind a feeling of security and trust, but to bring about diametrically opposed views in those better versed in the financial transactions of the City. Everything has such a painfully new appearance, from the outer door, with its burnished name plate, to the Remington typewriter in the snug little inner office of the proprietor, that the sagacious ones, who have seen the little farce played so often, wink mysteriously as they pass, and enter into mental calculations as to how many months will elapse before the announcement on the door of the name and some portion of the business of the



proprietor, shall give place to the terse but comprehensive phrase, "To let."

Two mahogany swing doors, resplendent with plate-glass and polished fittings, guarded by a stern and dignified commissionaire, separate the clerks' office from the corridor, and, passing these, the caller enters the realms of financial fairy-land—the fairy-land of the company promoter; the land of impossible schemes, improbable gold mines, and unheard-of concessions of every description.

What a business Mr. Hazard must be doing, or expects to do! Ledgers, day-books, and journals, elegantly lettered and numbered, line the walls, deed-boxes innumerable crowd the shelves, masses of papers cover the desks, and legions of letters and circulars lie ready for the post in wicker baskets. Above all hovers the mysterious air of business, financial business, which causes hurried consultations amongst the clerks, and frequent rushes to those eminently respectable telephones and tapes upon the walls.

In the inner office, the privileged room for the privileged client, the grim business air slightly relaxes, a couple of boxes of cigars and a hamper of champagne throw a lighter gleam upon the scene, the chairs are easier and more seductive, the desk the very latest American triumph of convenience, and even the steel safe itself is relieved by a cut-glass decanter and liqueur glasses to match. Gentle harmony of business and pleasure, with a typewriter to keep the balance on the right side.

Mr. Hazard is leaning back in his chair, with a cigar between his teeth, dictating, and watching with the air of a connoisseur the nimble fingers of his pretty lady clerk.

"Just one thing more, Miss Seaton, if you do not mind, and I have finished," he says in his politest tone. For what proclaims so well the good breeding of a man as courtesy to inferiors. "Just put at the top, 'Answers to Correspondents;' now then, 'Enquirer.—Yes, we should certainly advise you to buy the shares of the 'Signs of the Zodiac Mine.' It is a wonderful property, and the latest cablegrams speak of the discovery of a reef assaying seventy-four ounces to the ton. The present price is ridiculous when the next dividend is likely to be four or five hundred per cent."

Taking a sheet of paper he writes: "Dear sir, the inclosed included amongst your 'Answers to Correspondents' will come under our agreement. Kindly place it in a prominent position," and then turns with renewed interest to his cigar.

The girl takes up her papers and leaves the room, and Mr. Hazard, resting his feet upon the mantelpiece, sinks into meditation.

Notwithstanding the existing "boom" in mining properties out West, things are not going well in this particular promoter's office. Rivals are snapping up the really good properties, any one of which if launched by him would condone past failures and pave the way for fresh enterprises to be sprung on the unsuspecting public. Unless he could put a really genuine concern on the market, he would pretty soon have to say good-bye to London, and try the confidence trick elsewhere, and where on earth was he going to get a genuine concern?

"It means cut and run again," he muttered, unless something turns up in a week.

A smart-looking boy in a chocolate coloured suit, plentifully besprinkled with buttons, knocks at the door, and entering the room, interrupts the soliloquy.

"Two gentlemen to see you, sir."

The promoter examines the cards: "Paul Restron and Jabez Phillips. Don't know them at all. Never mind, show them in."

Mr. Hazard smoothes the ugly-looking lines from his face, tones the shark-like expression into one of affable courtesy, and the gentlemen enter.

Mr. Hazard motions them to a couple of comfortable seats, and waits.

"You are a company promoter, Mr. Hazard," says Restron, somewhat nervously.

The promoter inclines his head.

"And I hear you have been very successful in that branch of business."

"Passably, my dear sir, passably," says Mr. Hazard, rubbing his hands together. "I am fairly well known in the City. You are desirous of floating a company?"

"Not exactly. My friend and I," indicating Phillips, "have just returned from Nevada."

Mr. Hazard nearly jumps out of his seat with delight.

"Ah," he replies, "splendid country, valuable mineral deposits, quite a favourite district just now. Have a cigar?"

He hands his case, and Messrs. Phillips and Restron light up; then a gold-foiled bottle is opened and healths are drunk.

Mr. Hazard scents a good thing, and thinks a little hospitality may well be interposed. He must not seem anxious, he must do nothing in a hurry. This looks like the genuine concern he was hoping for.

Presently he picks up the thread of the conversation.

"You were saying—?"

"That we want to dispose of a property—the 'Will o' the Wisp' Mine, in Nevada. This is some of the ore," and Restron hands over a specimen to Mr. Hazard.

"Splendid stuff," ejaculates the promoter. "Much of this kind of ore?"

"Tons."

"Good."

"We are anxious," says Restron, observing the satisfaction with which Mr. Hazard handles the quartz, "to get the matter through as quickly as possible, and shall be read to come to terms as soon as you like."

Mr. Hazard purses his lips, lays the lump of ore down upon the desk, helps himself to a glass of wine, and



"My son is my son till he have got him a wife," then, alas! she has the right to my copy of HOME NOTES.

slowly replies: "Of course, my dear sir, of course, the sooner the better, but these little financial transactions are never hurried in the City. I must have time to decide how to proceed in this matter, as I have one or two other irons in the fire. A large amount of capital will be required to develop and properly work this property, and we must form a big company. What's the name of the mine?"



"The Will o' the Wisp."
"Ah, yes, 'The Will o' the Wisp' Gold Mining Company, with a capital of £500,000 in shares of £1 each," continued Mr. Hazard almost to himself. "An excellent Californian property of proved value, which has already yielded thousands of ounces of gold. Assays and specimens of ore on view at the office of Mr. Julian Hazard. Have you brought the deeds with you?"

Restron hands over the documents, which Mr. Hazard carefully examines. He seems perfectly satisfied and returns them. "I won't ask you to leave these with me," he says, "because as a business man talking to business men I am perfectly sure you would not do so, but with your permission I will retain till our next meeting this map of the district and the rough plan of the mine, also you may as well leave those specimens here, they'll be all right in the safe. I'll give you a receipt for them if you like. No? very well then, we understand things perfectly, I can see we can trust one another and that is the first step towards a mutually satisfactory bargain."

Mr. Hazard unlocks the safe and deposits therein the plans and specimens of ore, and then turning to his guests, remarks: "Well, you'll allow me a day or so in which to formulate my arrangements, and then we'll meet again, and talk over the financial aspects of the affair."

"We were rather anxious to get the whole thing settled off hand," Phillips interrupts.

"Naturally, of course," Mr. Hazard replies, "and we won't delay matters long. Let me see, this is Tuesday. I shall be ready for you on Friday—no, say Saturday, and we'll go into the question of purchase price, and after that we'll have a little dinner at the Savoy, with a few of my friends whom I should like you to meet. You will excuse me now, but I have a particularly important interview this afternoon."

And with assurances that they have no desire to further trespass upon the time of so busy a man, Messrs. Restron and Phillips depart.

The moment they are gone, Mr. Hazard rings for Miss Seaton, and dictates another paragraph for the newspapers, not this time for his subsidised financial rags only, but for one or two of the regular dailies. It may go into the City column, of some, it may be omitted from others, but Nevada is good enough to talk about nowadays, and Mr. Hazard's preliminary is as follows:

"In the course of a few days the public will have the opportunity of subscribing for shares in a new gold mining venture. A company has been formed with a capital of £500,000 to acquire and work a proved property of phenomenal richness in the Nevadas, which has of late become such a favourite district. Mr. Julian Hazard, of Queen Victoria Street, will be the London representative of the company."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Oft when blind mortals think themselves secure, in height of bliss, they touch the brink of ruin."

EDGAR DEWSBURY has spent several days searching the Joint Stock registers at Somerset House, but has discovered nothing that can afford any clue to Norman Leigh's stolen property. Evidently it has not been launched upon the market yet. He saunters moodily along the Embankment, wondering if ever he shall obtain a clue that will lead to the discovery of Restron and Phillips.

A sensational placard of an enterprising newspaper, decorating the stand of an itinerant vendor of journalistic wares opposite the entrance to the Temple Station catches his eye, and he buys a copy. The matter magnified to the importance of enormous letters on the bill is hidden away in an obscure corner. It is only a trap to catch the curious—and the whole sensation is in the announcement on the placard. Like the entertainment outside a travelling circus, that which is given for nothing is often superior to that which is paid for, but as he casually glances through the paper, Mr. Hazard's announcement catches his eye. He has taken a great deal of interest in the pursuit of City and Mining Intelligence of late, hoping to glean some news of the promotion of a Nevada property, but up to the present has been unsuccessful. He has turned mechanically to the City column and Mr. Hazard's paragraph fascinates him; Julian Hazard—no, he did not recollect the name, but it would be easy to call upon that gentleman and ascertain some particulars of the projected mining enterprise.

He thought again—no, he did not remember the name of Hazard, but this kind of City people were so fond of altering their names as circumstances required. Here at last was something of a clue, a clue that had simply dropped into his hands, a clue that if followed carefully and diplomatically might perhaps eventually lead to the arrest of the scoundrels who had twice attempted the life of Norman Leigh, and who probably at that very instant held the deeds of the "Will o' the Wisp" Mine. Wrapped in a brown study, Edgar Dewsbury continues his walk along the

Embankment to Blackfriars Bridge, and then crosses to Queen Victoria Street, and seeks the office of the great Mr. Julian Hazard.

He finds it without difficulty, and is about to mount the stairs, when Mr. Hazard himself descends, that is to say, the gentleman who posed as Mr. Hazard, but whom the detective immediately recognised as a notorious swindler, who, under half-a-dozen aliases, had robbed and cheated the American public with bogus schemes and yet had always kept pretty clear from the clutches of the law.

Edgar Dewsbury felt a thrill of satisfaction run through his veins. When he saw the announcement in the newspaper, he felt that he was on the track, that he had got a clue that might turn out to be the right one, and now his hopes were strengthened, his expectations of success confirmed, as he saw Jacob Boston descending the stairs that led from the offices of Mr. Julian Hazard. For all he knew, Julian Hazard and Jacob Boston were one and the same person, and if that were only so then he was nearer to success than his most sanguine expectations could possibly have entitled him to hope.

Julian Hazard was to be associated with a new Nevada gold mine, and if Julian Hazard were Jacob Boston, then from what he knew of the latter gentleman and his tactics, he felt confident that the fact of the property being stolen would not in the least degree deter that individual from launching it upon the British public. No doubt Restron or Phillips, or the pair of them, had got to know of this shady promoter, and, secure in the belief that Norman Leigh was dead, they had parted with the deeds for what they would fetch, and hence the newspaper paragraph that he had seen that day. He watched the object of these reflections hail a hansom and drive away, and mounting the stairs, pushed open the mahogany swing doors and entered the realms of financial fairy-land.

In reply to his inquiry for Mr. Hazard, he learnt that that gentleman had left for the day only a moment before, which confirmed his suspicions that Julian Hazard and Jacob Boston were identical, and leaving word that he would call again to-morrow, he descended to the street.

Retracing his steps towards the Embankment, he leaned over the parapet, watching the rapidly flowing water, and wondering how he could best accomplish his ends for the recovery of the property of Norman Leigh from Mr. Julian Hazard, assuming that that gentleman, by fair means or foul, had acquired the mine from Restron and Phillips. How could he prove the identity of Norman Leigh, and substantiate his claim to the mine, and how, above all, could he succeed in capturing Restron and Phillips, neither of whom he had seen, and whose description Norman had given him but vaguely? It was a knotty problem. At first he had been elated at what looked like the prospect of sudden success, but the encompassing difficulties seemed to be stronger than ever. If he could prove that Hazard was in wrongful possession of the deeds of the "Will o' the Wisp" Mine, how could he enforce restitution, and who would believe the unsupported claim of Norman Leigh, a man who for months had been almost a madman? No, clever detective as he was, he was baffled; to believe or even to know was one thing, but to prove it—ah, that was distinctly another.

He pondered for a full hour, then an idea struck him, and he decided to wire for Norman to return to town on the morrow, just for one day, and to be present with him when he made his call upon Mr. Julian Hazard.

The earliest possible train brought Norman Leigh and Sterling up to London on Friday morning, Constance remaining with old Mrs. Sterling at Ventnor. Dewsbury met them at Waterloo, and the three proceeded to Queen Victoria Street.

Dewsbury was not the only man who had an interest in the arrival of Sterling and Leigh in London. On the Wednesday night the Red Circle had held its meeting, and lots had been drawn to decide who was to be the avenger of Oscar Shepworth, who was to be the man who should drive up to its red hilt the murderous knife between the shoulders of his betrayer, James Sterling. Two vicious eyes watched Sterling's arrival, and the owner of them crept silently away, and was lost in the crowd—crept away Eastward, waiting till the night should fall.

Mr. Hazard was very busy, but he could spare the gentlemen five minutes.

The stately commissioner stepped aside, the impressive doors swung open, and Edgar Dewsbury, James Sterling, and Norman Leigh entered the sanctum of the company promoter.

Half-an-hour later, when they emerged, Norman Leigh was looking bewildered, but delighted, James Sterling somewhat grave, and Edgar Dewsbury triumphant.

"Good-bye till Saturday, then," said the detective, as he shook Norman's hand. "When we meet here again then, Mr. Boston—I beg his pardon—Hazard—will enable you to renew your acquaintance with Restron and Phillips, and then I, by the aid of the authorities, will provide for those gentlemen's accommodation for a considerable time to come."

And even while they spoke, if they had turned their heads, they would have seen in the shadow of a doorway, Phillips ghastly white, clutching the arm of Restron, and pointing his nervous finger across the road, as he gasped: "My God, Restron, look! Norman Leigh alive!"

And these two also crept Eastward, following Sterling and Norman Leigh.



CHAPTER IX.

"Murder most foul, as at best it is."

KEEPING Sterling and Leigh well in sight, Restron and Phillips follow them to the other end of London to the parish of St. David's-in-the-East, and are only contented when the two enter the Rectory gates. Then they seek the congenial quarters of the nearest bar and fortifying themselves with an abundant supply of liquor, ensconce themselves in a corner, and review the situation in whispers.

"Of all the cursed luck that ever beset us, this is the worst!" whines Phillips. "To think he is alive after all!"

"Don't snivel, you cur!" Restron retorts, mad with annoyance at the possibility of losing the haul just at the moment that the cash is almost within his grasp. "Don't snivel, there'll be some work for you to do presently. You can't invent, but I suppose you can act—can follow instructions."

"Certainly, Paul, certainly; anything to aid our plans. I've never pretended to much education. You're the man of brains, the man who lays out the plot, and I'm willing to do whatever you ask me. You've only to say the word and it's done—and I stand in for halves, eh, Paul? It's always been understood halves, eh?"

"Don't prate, you idiot! Don't you know the adage about counting chickens before they're hatched. You do what you're told, and you'll be all right, and you take it from me there's a job in store for you that will try your pluck and prove whether or not you've got any grit in you."

"I'm game for whatever you want, Paul," answers Phillips, with an attempt at bravery that he is far from feeling, a bravado that is belied by his ashen face.

"Well, you know, we've got to see Hazard to-morrow, to fix up about the mine."

"Yes."
"Well, what's the good of going round there with Leigh alive? Eh? Hazard won't pay cash on the nail, I can tell by the look of him; he'll want to see his own profit safe before he parts to us, and while we're waiting, Leigh is sure to see something in the papers about the mine, and then—we shall have to cut."

"Well, what are we to do?"

"What are we to do?" mimics Restron, "what are you to do, you mean? We, it's always we. Now, then, it's your turn. If I think out a plan to save the thing, will you do exactly what I tell you, eh? Do it without question and without a murmur, and mind you succeed in it, no bungling, no failure. If you fail, I'll—"

and Restron does not say what he will do, but concludes the sentence by finishing his brandy, and then orders a fresh supply.

"I've said I'll do anything you want me to, Paul. It's sure to be the right thing; you've a wonderful brain."

"Then listen. Half a minute. Here's your drink, lower it. You'll need all your courage for this job."

Phillips drains his glass, and an excited flush begins to spread over his features. Dutch courage is coming to his rescue.

"Now look here," says Restron, lighting his pipe. "You'll have to go through with what I'm going to tell you now, or you'll have to back out at once and leave me alone. Do you hear?"

"Certainly, Paul."

"Then," and he sinks his voice to a whisper, "you've got to kill Norman Leigh to-night. It's a pity I didn't let you finish him on the Windsor Road a year ago, but you can make up for it now, and mind you don't fail this time."

Phillips' colour begins to fade again.

"Now then, choose. Do we part company, or do you do your share?"

"Must we kill him?"

"Yes—not we, but you."

"You'll do your share, Restron?"

"Oh, yes, I'll do my share. I'll watch till the coast is clear. I'll warn you of any danger."

"I don't half like it. London is different from the country."

"Choose. You do it, or we part."

"But when—where?"

"To-night, and at the parson's house, where you saw them go to-day. I expect he's staying there. You can go down by-and-bye while they're away and find out the best means of effecting an entrance, and then you can get in later and settle him, and to-morrow we shall be able to see Hazard and fix up about the mine. Do you do it?"

"It's devilish dangerous."

"It's worth it. You were not so squeamish before."

"This will be the third time we've tried."

"There's luck in odd numbers. Have another drink."

Again the glasses are filled and emptied, and at last, inflamed with drink, excited with avarice fed by the persuasions of Restron, and piqued with words dropped seemingly at random about his want of courage, Phillips agrees, and Restron leans back comfortably in his seat, and, puffing his pipe, thinks of the deeds in his breast coat-pocket, and wonders if, after Phillips has got rid of Norman Leigh, there cannot be some way found of getting rid of Phillips.

If ever James Sterling felt happy in his life, it was the day that he set foot again in the old, rambling rectory. He could not rest idle, however, and only allowing Leigh and himself time to snatch a hurried meal, he

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dragged Norman off with him on a visit to the poor folk of his scattered parish.

Norman had felt all along that Sterling was a tramp, and that he owed a debt of gratitude to him for all that he had done in rescuing his almost ruined life from the downward path which he was so rapidly treading, but he had never known or realised what a really good man James Sterling was. Working silently and unostentatiously in the thick of that crowded parish, how he helped here and encouraged there, how faces brightened at his voice, and light came into eyes that were dull and careworn.

Brave, James Sterling! Would there were more like you, and yet the edict has gone forth, the Red Circle has drawn lots for your execution, and the hour of their vengeance approaches.

Oscar Shepworth, their leader, is betrayed, and James Sterling's moments are numbered by the Red Circle.

And so for hours Sterling and Norman thread the lanes and courts and alleys of the parish of St. David's-in-the-East, and Norman's heart grows heavy at the squalor and the poverty, while Sterling feels that he has been absent too long; that though he has saved Norman and that Constance will be happy, his flock needs his protecting care, and he vows to devote his heart and soul to them. To do all he can to alleviate their sorrows, their misery and distress.

He had forgotten Shepworth and his threat, and so the day wore on and the evening settled down.

As the night draws in the elected of the Red Circle makes his way towards the Rectory of St. David's. He is a young and agile man, with sharp, piercing eyes. He glides along, keeping to the side streets, until he reaches the long, bare wall that surrounds Sterling's house, and then, watching till he is certain he is unperceived, pushes open the side-door, and hides himself amongst the trees of the old garden, waiting with his hand clenched upon the crimson-hafted knife that is to avenge Oscar Shepworth, who is toiling in the quarries of Portland.

Half-hours and hours chime, but no one enters the garden. All is dark and silent, but the relentless avenger waits on.

Presently the footstep of two men walking rapidly sound on the other side of the wall, and the watcher within the garden strains his ears, and stands with his hand grasping the dagger in his pocket.

The footstep paces at the side-door, he tries to overhear the parting words of the men, but cannot, though he edges close to the door, that he may be behind it when it is thrown open.

"Go quietly," Reston says in a whisper to Phillips, "see where you can get in easiest for to-night's job. If you run across anyone, plead poverty. Say you want to see Sterling. He's out, and so you're safe. If anyone is coming through this door I'll whistle like this, twice," and he softly blows between his fingers. "Now, look sharp and go."

Cautionally Reston pushes open the door, and Phillips steps in. For a second there is no sound, then as he creeps round the wall he brushes against something soft and yielding. He starts, a cry of terror dies stifled in its birth, as the wiry fingers of a man clutch his throat.

For an instant there is a deadly struggle between them. Phillips, trying to free himself from the unknown assailant, and then, attracted by the noise, Reston pushes the door open, and glances in, only to see the flash of a shining blade, as it buries itself in the chest of Phillips, and to be hurled over by the murderer in his headlong flight, as he dashes through the doorway, and flies like the wind down the street and out of sight.

For an instant Reston stands rooted to the spot, gazing at Phillips lying there dead, with the red-handled dagger in his breast, and then suddenly the thought of his own danger awakens him, and, slipping gently into the street, he pulls the door to behind him, and saunters slowly westward. He wanted Norman Leigh out of his way, and someone had removed Phillips instead. Perhaps they, too, were lying in wait for Leigh. What was to be done now?

Should he go back to his rooms and chance it, or should he fly? Should he get out of England before the murder was discovered and the man identified or should he wait?

When Leigh returned with the Parson, he would recognise Phillips, and the hue and cry would be raised. Then, perhaps, it would be too late for escape. Yes, he had better go. It was all up now; he would not be able to keep his appointment with Mr. Hazard next day, but, lucky thought, there was no Phillips! Norman Leigh and the Parson would be back soon, and find the body lying in the Rectory garden. They would be some time before they could act. He would be able to escape from England, almost before the murder was discovered. It was no use staying here, he was innocent of the deed, but who would believe him? No one. He and Phillips had always been seen together, and they would arrest him for the murder. He must escape.

He spent the night at a low lodging-house in the Waterloo Road, and by the earliest train in the morning was on his way to Southampton, bound for New York by the Paris. If he had any luck, he thought, he would sell the mine there now that the boom was on, if not, well he would go out to Nevada again, and sell it on the spot.

It is close upon 11 p.m. when Norman Leigh and James Sterling return to the Rectory. The moon is struggling through the heavy clouds that have been sweeping up, and

shines through the fantastic patterns of the interleaved branches of the trees in the Rectory garden.

Sterling pushes open the gate, and, followed by Norman, enters, only to stumble over something upon the pathway.

"Who's hiding here?" cries Sterling, as he recovers himself; but no voice answers him, and, bending down over the figure lying on the ground, he, with the help of Norman, rolls the man over.

"Murder!" cries Norman, as he catches sight of the dagger, round which the crimson blood has oozed.

"Murder by the Red Circle!" says Sterling, and, strong man as he is, he trembles, for the threat of Oscar Shepworth comes into his mind again, and he realises that this poor wretch, whoever he is, has paid the penalty for him.

"Do you know the man?" asks Norman, as Sterling bends down over the body.

Striking a match and shading the light with his hand, James Sterling gazes on the white and pain-drawn face. "No," he says, "a stranger. There is some terrible mystery here."

The match is almost out, and Norman, impelled by some strange fascination, glances over Sterling's shoulder.

"My God!" he cries, staggering back, "it's Phillips!"

"Phillips—one of the two who robbed and attacked you in New York and then again at Windsor?" says Sterling as they stand with the body at their feet.

"The same."

"Then this is the hand of fate. He must have crept in here to murder you, but was slain by the Red Circle in mistake for me."

"The Red Circle?" queries Leigh, bewildered.

"Yes, come, I will explain," and as Norman and Sterling stand at the gate waiting till a policeman passes, Sterling tells Leigh the story of Oscar Shepworth, of his arrest and threat, and thanks Providence that saved Norman's life and his own, even at the cost of that of Jabez Phillips.

The body is removed to the mortuary, and then Sterling and Norman, unable to rest or sleep, go in search of Edgar Dewsbury. He is not to be found at his chambers, and

wearily for hours they pace the silent streets, walking they scarce know where, and talking with voices subdued with emotion, their hearts full of thankfulness that they had been held scatheless when they had so nearly stood beneath the shadow of Death.

The dawn is almost in the sky before they retire to rest, and it is close upon ten o'clock when, as they sit at breakfast, Edgar Dewsbury arrives. He had been out all night upon an important case, and had only just reached his chambers and got their note.

He listens to their story, and then, turning to Leigh, asks: "You have seen nothing of Reston?"

"Nothing."

"You do not know where he was staying in London?"

"No."

"Hazard would know," suggests Sterling.

"Good," answers Dewsbury, and in five minutes they are on their way to the City. The address is obtained from Mr. Hazard, but, on calling at it, they are told that neither Reston nor Phillips have been home all night.

"He's bolted," cries Dewsbury. "I should not wonder if he's making tracks for Nevada again. Meet in my rooms in half-an-hour," and Dewsbury rushes off, to stop at the first telegraph office and wire to a colleague at Southampton a description of Reston, asking if such a man has boarded the Paris. He waits in the office for a reply, and at last it comes:

"Train on almost directly. Will watch."

And the few minutes later:

"Yes, just left train and boarded the boat. Shall we arrest him?"

He replies: "No; am cabling America," and then returns to his chambers to meet Leigh and Norman, to tell them that Reston has flown to Nevada again, and will probably sell the mine there. Then he suggests that a trip across to thwart that gentleman's plans would be very gratifying, that the voyage would do Leigh all the good in the world, and help Sterling to forget the horror of the Red Circle. They need little persuasion to agree, and Dewsbury undertakes the arrangement of all formalities.

A hurried visit is paid to Vintnor, where Constance and Mrs. Sterling will remain till their return, and then, with a lingering farewell, Norman Leigh departs.

CHAPTER X.

"Reason's whole pleasure, all the joy of sense,
Lie in three words—health, peace, and competence."

THE Southampton mail train has just steamed along the quay, and all is confusion. It wants but a quarter of an hour to midday, and the gigantic deck of the *St. Paul* is covered with cabin luggage, while the porters rush up and down the gangway, ever adding to the disorder upon the deck, a disorder which seems to grow wilder and wilder every moment, a confusion which one would think could never be overcome.

The last bell rings. All those for the shore must leave. There are the final hand-shakings, the last sighs, the last moments of fearful anxiety as nervous travellers make sure for the fiftieth time that all their luggage is on board, and then the gangways are drawn back, and quietly and calmly the giant *St. Paul* swings from the dock.

There is a cheer from the quay, which is answered from the ship, and then the docks fade, seem to glide away, and the vessel starts on her voyage to America.

Down Southampton Water, past the wooded slopes and verdant stretches of Hampshire, past the *Norham Castle*, which looks like a dainty yacht beside the black hull of the American liner, past *Hurst Castle*, and the *Iale of Wight*, and then out into the open Channel, and full speed ahead for Sandy Hook.

Three men are pacing the deck of the *St. Paul*, drinking to their full the sharp breezes of the Channel. Each one alert and expectant, waiting anxiously for the call to lunch.

"It's a treat to be alive, that's what I say," Norman Leigh asserts, taking a long pull at his briar, "a treat to be alive. Only fancy, James, fancy, Dewsbury, my boy, a week of this kind of thing with nothing to think about, nothing to do."

"It's a fearful waste of time," the detective answers impatiently. "Who knows but what we may not be too late after all. Suppose that precious scoundrel Reston has sold your mine before we can get out there. He's in New York by this time, and will be at Nevada several days before us."

"Well, it can't be helped, my dear fellow," Sterling says with a laugh, "all the rage in the world won't move the *St. Paul* any faster than her top speed, so you'd better try and calm yourself. There's one thing that has troubled me a little, though," he continues, "you always count on Reston going to Nevada before he tries to sell the mine. Suppose he should get rid of it in New York?"

"He can't do it," Dewsbury replies, "I've looked after that. I don't think there are any buyers for the 'Will o' the Wisp' Mine in any big city of the States. Besides, I think I judge him rightly. He's a clever scamp, not a fool. He won't offer the mine for sale in New York, because no matter how great a bargain he was willing to make it, people would not buy without investigation. No man in New York would buy a mine in Nevada without having it examined and reported upon by experts, all of which would mean delay, and delay is the one thing that our man cannot stand. If he does not know, at all events, he has a very strong suspicion that he is being chased, and, therefore, to court delay would be to court detection. In my opinion he will make tracks for Nevada directly he arrives at New York. The 'Will o' the Wisp' Mine is believed to be particularly worthless, and he will put the story about that he has bought it from Leigh for a trifle, and set to work. In a few days he will pretend to make the discovery that it is fabulously rich, and eventually carry out the sale as speedily as possible to one of the great neighbouring companies."

"Then you think we shall be there in time?" Norman interjects.

"If my assumptions are correct we shall arrive at the very moment of the scoundrel's triumph; if they are wrong, well, we'll try again."

For a moment the three men pace the deck and then Dewsbury suddenly turns to James Sterling.

"Oh, by-the-way, Mr. Sterling, I think I am not breaking a very great confidence if I tell you a police secret. I shall know at all events you won't divulge it to the morning papers," he continues with a laugh, glancing at the sea and sky around him. "You spoke of leaving England altogether, did you not?"

"Yes, I'm not a particularly nervous man, but since that poor wretch was found in my garden, stabbed, I have realised that the Red Circle is not an organisation to be sneered at, and as I'm more use living than dead, I shall try and lose my identity. Depend upon it, they won't make a mistake next time."

"Well, I don't think you will have to keep out of England after all, for when we return from America the Red Circle will be crushed and powerless, its leaders hanged or imprisoned, its associates scattered and crushed. Oscar Shepworth has betrayed his comrades. To-morrow night the meeting place will be raided and the anarchists of Europe, who have made England their home, taught a lesson that they will remember for years. I give you my word, Mr. Sterling, you may after to-morrow safely return to your parish, for that hideous gang of murderers has run its course. To-morrow those who have imagined that England will bear anything, harbour the biggest scoundrels of Europe, and defend them from the avenging hand of their own Governments, will find that they have erred. To-morrow the Red Circle will be crushed, to-morrow England will relentlessly deal forth vengeance on the murderers who have terrorised London."

And so while Paul Reston feverishly makes his way across the great continent to Nevada, the shadows of his pursuers have almost overtaken him, already, did he but know it, he is captured.

It is late at night when he reaches the nearest township to the mines, and restlessly sets to work to discover any news of the "Will o' the Wisp." It was as he thought. No one knew anything about it, and Leigh had not turned up to claim it. It was so utterly valueless that none had troubled to interfere with it, and the man whom Norman had left in charge had gone.

Good, he thought; then all was safe. Whether he was being chased or not, at all events he had a few days in which to do the trick.

"I met Leigh last week in Illinois," he remarked as he stood talking to some of his old companions at the bar of the drinking saloon. "He's come into a bit of money and gone to England, so I did a deal with him for the 'Will o' the Wisp' claim."

"What? Bought the 'Dust-hole'?" Well upon my word you must be an idiot! Haven't you seen enough fools sucked in there without joining the band?"

"Oh, I don't know, it was cheap enough; I only paid twenty quid for it, and you never know your luck. Have another?"



HOW DID THE THIEF GET IN?

You wake up some morning and miss your watch, your purse, your best clothes, and other valuables. Yet neither you nor any member of your family heard a sound during the night. Neither is there a sign of how the thief got into the house nor by what road he decamped. You rush round and tell the police, and also decide to keep a dog and a shot gun. You will let thieves know they mustn't come fooling around your premises after this. A sensible procedure. Meanwhile your watch, your money, &c., are gone. Quite so.

Now suppose I should tell you that the thief who stole your property never entered your house at all; that he was born in it; had lived twenty years in it; never had been out of it till he went off with your things, albeit not a soul of you had ever seen or heard of him. What would you say to me? You would call me an idiot and threaten to have me sent back to the asylum. But don't be too sure.

Here is our very good friend, Mr. Richard Heakin, of Pentervin, Salop, who expresses an opinion in this line. Let us have his exact words. He says: "*Rheumatism struck into my system.*" Of course we understand that he speaks after the manner of men. You know we talk of being "attacked" by this, that, and the other complaint, as though diseases were like soldiers or wild beasts. "Doesn't make any odds," do you say? Beg pardon, but it does—heavy odds. *For it teaches us to look in the wrong direction for danger.* Do you see now?

Thirteen years ago, in the spring of 1880, whilst working in the Roman Gravel Lead Mines, Mr. Heakin took a bad cold. He got over the cold, but not over what followed it. He was feeble, without appetite, and had a deal of pain in the chest and sides. His eyes and skin were tinted yellow, and his hands and feet were cold and clammy. Frequently he would break out into a cold perspiration, as a man does on receiving a nervous shock caused by something fearful or horrible. He was also troubled with pain at the heart and had spells of difficult breathing—what medical men call asthma.

"Later on," says Mr. Heakin, "rheumatism struck into my

system and I had pains all over me. I was confined a three months with it and could not dress myself. In this condition I continued for five years. One after another I was treated by *fourteen doctors* in that time, but their medicines did me little good. At one time I went to the Infirmary at Shrewsbury, they treated me for heart disease; but I got worse, and feeling an returned home."

How he was finally cured we will mention in a minute. However, about his rheumatism. Every intelligent person knows rheumatism and gout (its twin brother) is virtually a universal ailment. It does its cruel and body-racking work in every country and climate. No other malady causes so vast an aggregate of suffering and disability. Whatever will cure it is worth more money in England than a mine in every country.

But does rheumatism "strike into" the system as a bullet might strike into it? No. Rheumatism is the thief who away our comfort and strength; but it is a thief, as I said, who *born on the premises*. In other words, it is one—and only on the direct consequences of indigestion and dyspepsia. And this is why and wherefore: Indigestion creates a poison called uric acid which combines with the chloride of sodium to form a salt; this urate of sodium, which is deposited in the form of *sharp crystals* the muscles and joints. Then comes inflammation and agony, or wise rheumatism. Thus you perceive that it doesn't come from outside but from the inside—from the stomach. Our friend's caught in the mine, didn't produce his rheumatism, it clogged him and so kept all the poison in his body instead of letting part of it

Mr. Heakin adds: "I was cured at last by Mother Seabright's Curative Syrup, and without it I believe I should have been long ago."

Very likely, very likely; for this thief, although he may wait for his opportunity, isn't always satisfied to run away with our comfort and our money: he often takes life too.

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at the first four hours and then having right to the claim before the not over ads of the district, he proceeded with half-a-commence working.

Session was viewed with the greatest delight by the township; they had seen it so often before. A prospector starting off with brilliant hopes and returning in a few weeks ruined. The "Will o' the Wisp" Mine, or, as it was jeeringly referred to by those who knew it, the "Dust-hole," had been sold and re-sold so often, that it was really the joke of the State. Sometimes it had been got rid of easily owing to its proximity to valuable properties, at others it had been faked up for any very verdant gentleman, and the consensus of opinion was that it had thus really returned more gold than half-a-dozen good properties put together. But the advance of civilisation had killed it. There were too many syndicates and companies now which refused to be caught. Men did not buy mines but bought shares in companies, and found it just as easy to be widdled that way as in actually purchasing a property or themselves, and so the "Will o' the Wisp" Mine was forgotten.

Still, things were waking up again. Another man was starting for the "Dust-hole," and the cream of the joke was that he was a man who really ought to know better. He was supposed to understand a bit about mining.

"Mind I don't knock all your eyes out by coming back a millionaire," Restron shouted with a grin as he left them, and the group laughed uproariously at the subtlety of the joke.

In two days the wildest of rumours spread through the town. "The Will o' the Wisp" Mine had turned out a bonanza, and Paul Restron looked like fulfilling his joke and becoming a millionaire.

So far so good, but he was in a fever of impatience. Any day he might be discovered. Any day might bring Norman Leigh to claim his own. Perversity of fortune. He held what anyone was willing to buy, but could not get rid of it. He had offered the mine to a wealthy syndicate at a good price, and they had agreed to buy, but they would not hurry. It was not like the expenditure of a few shillings, they explained. A hundred thousand pounds was a large sum, and everything must be carried out in the most rigorously binding fashion. They would have to be most careful—it was their duty to their shareholders; and they were sure Mr. Restron would not desire otherwise, and Paul Restron, tuning with suppressed rage, was bound to wait with what patience he could, dreading that every day would bring his pursuers down upon him.

With all his newly acquired wealth Restron had not taken an overwhelming hold upon the affections of the miners. Perhaps he was envied for his sudden flush of luck, and perhaps some of them wondered whether that story of buying the deeds for a twenty pound note was true. Those who had lived some time in the locality remembered that it was not the first time that Restron had been mixed up in a rather shady affair. There had been one or two peculiar robberies when he was so thick with that man Phillips, but somehow they had always been too clever to come more than suspected.

"Did Leigh say whether he was ever coming up to have a look at the place again, Restron?" one of the miners asks, as they sit in the drinking saloon, after the day's work.

"No."

"Eh? Money doesn't seem to have improved your manners."

"What have my manners to do with you?" Restron replies with a grunt, and turns to his cards and drink.

"Curse the luck!" he exclaims, "at last it's all against me. I've had enough for to-night," and he throws himself back in his chair and scowls at the smoke-begrimed ceiling.

A nod of understanding goes round amongst some half-dozen of the miners, and the others grin in anticipation. Restron has become quite an evening pastime, and is just about to begin.

One of them remembered Norman Leigh and many respected him, but Restron had never been better than a wing thief and they all knew it, although no one at once convicted him.

"Did Leigh look well?" one of them asks with a burst of eniality.

"Yes, all right."

"I say, Restron, what a bit of luck to buy those deeds!"

"What on earth have my deeds to do with you?"

"Nothing, thank goodness!"

"I suppose Leigh didn't drop 'em and you picked 'em up, eh? Or I suppose you didn't pick 'em up before they were dropped?"

There is a murderous glint in Paul Restron's eye, but he dare not attempt to cow these men with bluster.

"Now, shut up," he says with attempted heartiness; "shut up. Don't worry a chap. Let's have a bottle of Scotch and a dozen glasses, Johnson. Don't chip me, boys, I've got a lot of business on hand."

"Well, give us a toast," one of the men exclaims as he dispenses the whisky; "give us a toast and we'll let you alone."

"The 'Dust-hole,'" Restron says, with a gleam of ponderous humour.

"Oh, hang the 'Dust-hole,' let's drink the health of the man who gave it away for twenty quid. He'll want a bit of luck. Now then, Restron, stand up and chuck it off. Say: 'Here's to my dear friend, Norman Leigh.'"

"Curse Norman Leigh!"

"Well, we can do that afterwards; you've got to drink his health. Go on, you shark, you've done him out of his mine."

"It's a lie. I bought it."

"All right, you bought it then. We don't care, drink up."

"Very well, you're a jolly lot of boys; I don't mind obliging you. Here's to Norman Leigh."

"Norman Leigh!" a dozen voices shout, and the glasses are drained.

"Thank you, gentlemen."

With a start the group faces round and Restron puts his hand behind his back, as he sees Norman Leigh standing in the doorway with a man on either side.

Then, as Norman is surrounded by those who remember, Paul Restron makes his way stealthily towards the door. A sharp-looking man is staring with a somewhat abstracted air at Norman as he shakes hands with his newly-found friends. Restron passes him with extreme caution, only to be gently drawn back by the stranger a moment afterwards.

"Sit down, Restron," he remarks, "we haven't followed you all the way from London to let you leave us like that. Oh, no, you need not feel in your hip pocket, I relieved you of that little article when you turned your back upon me. Sit down; the game's up."

"That be damned for a tale," Restron cries, as he takes one of the heavy wooden chairs from the floor. "Let the man who wants to die catch this," and with a bound he jumps upon a table and stands with his back to the wall, the chair lifted high above his head. In an instant he is covered by half-a-dozen revolvers and there is a death-like silence as he stands at bay. "Drop that chair and hands up, or I'll let the light through you in a twinkling," a voice shouts.

"Come and fetch me!" he roars defiantly.

There is the sharp report, and Restron, struck on the fingers with a bullet, flings the chair amongst them, and, with a shriek of pain, follows in its track and fights and struggles right and left, his wounded hand leaving its crimson mark wherever it touches. And then he is bound and hurled upon the floor, while Dewsbury, ever businesslike, unstrapping a belt about the man's waist, opens the pocket and gazes at the papers within with a chuckle of satisfaction.

"Deeds of the 'Will-o'-the-Wisp' Mine," he mutters.

"Good!"

"No need to ask why you're after the blackguard," one of the men exclaims, as he turns towards Norman again.

"Jumped your claim, eh?"

"Yes, that's one thing," Dewsbury ventures; "but there's also a couple of other trifles in the shape of attempted murder."

"Then we'll save any arguing by settling the job at once."

"What do you mean?" Norman sharply interrupts.

"Lynch him."

"And become murderers yourselves. I defy you to do it!"

"Now, it's no use talking rot, Leigh; you know as well as I do that the law of this part for claim-jumping is the rope."

"No law justifies murder; if you harm a hair of his head, I'll give information against every one of you."

"Well, we'll risk that; come on boys, find the rope."

In a moment a rope is attached to one of the rafters, a slip noose made, a table placed underneath, and then James Sterling forces his way through the men, and stands with his back to the table.

"Are you a set of madmen?" he shouts, his face pale with excitement. "Who appointed you as judges and executioners to launch a man, however vile, into eternity? Let the man have a trial, a fair trial, don't damn your own souls for him."

"We don't want a trial; besides, it's right enough."

"Yes, I did it right enough," Restron yells from the floor, "and I only regret I failed. Do what you like, you fools, I don't care for you, and I don't want a person to plead for my neck. Bah!"

"Oh, he's a parson, is he?" one of the men sneers. "Well, get out of it, parson, we don't want any cant. Get out of it before your tender nerves give way."

"Because I'm a parson I'll stop, because I'm a parson I'll stand here and defend him with my life," Sterling continues; "because I'm a parson I'll keep you from blackening your souls with such a crime, if you have no fear for me, fear for yourselves, fear for the curse that will fall upon you, the curse of blood-guiltiness. As a parson I dare you to touch a hair of his head. There is your victim, hang him if you dare, murder him if you dare, and I say that everyone who lays a finger on him shall die just such a death himself."

Superstitiously cowed, the men shrink back.

"What do you want to do with him?" one sulkily asks.

"Let the law deal with him."

"All right then, have your own way. I suppose it's a parson's nature to be chicken-hearted. Have your own way, and then you'll be—"

The man glances at the floor, and then gives a yell of rage, as he points to the spot where Restron was, and where now there is nothing but a bundle of rope.

"Hang it," he cries, "while you've been preaching the brute has gone."

In one wild crowd the miners rush from the house and chase a figure they can see flying along in the moonlight.

"There he is—after him."

"Come on, parson, you're not such a bad sort after all. Stick to me, and mind the pits."

In a knot the men pursue the figure, now and then making a sudden turn to avoid some disused shaft, and the sharp reports of revolvers ring out upon the air, as one man or another halts and takes a sight.

Suddenly there comes a sharp cry from the fugitive, a yell of horror, and then the place where he had been is empty. The men halt in a body and look at one another.

"He's done us after all," one exclaims.

"What do you mean?"

"Fallen down Porter's shaft. Two hundred feet and forty feet of water. He's a goner, and the hangman's left bewailing. Come on, parson, let's get back and we'll have service."

A fortnight later, the *St. Louis* is racing across the Atlantic for England. On her broad deck seated in hammock chairs are three men smoking and chatting: Edgar Dewsbury, elated at the success of his enterprise in the recovery of Norman Leigh's property; James Sterling, yearning to be at work again in his old Rectory of St. David's, living his life's allotted span in well doing; Norman Leigh, glad to have sold his mine for a sum that will make him independent for life, and enable him to help Sterling's glorious work far beyond that splendid fellow's wildest hopes or dreams; and yet a little sad, for his thoughts are far away across those miles of foaming waters, and the top speed of the mighty *St. Louis* seems to him but a snail's pace, which bears him all too slowly home to Constance.

THE END.

NO FAINT HEART ABOUT HIM.—Jennie (reprovingly): "But we're not under the mistletoe now, Jack."

Jack unabashed: "So much the nicer."

CUSTOMER (looking at bill): "Here, waiter, there's surely some mistake in this total."

Waiter (politely): "Zehn thousand pardons, sir! Mit my usual carelessness I have added in ze date and forgot to charge you for ze butter."

A LITTLE three-year-old, who had hitherto subsisted on a milk diet, had often watched with much interest his grandfather stirring his coffee before drinking. One morning, thinking that his grandpa had forgotten to do this, he inquired:

"Why don't you wind up your coffee, grandpa?"

SAVED HER LIFE.—Miss Pastelle: "It's too bad! I love you, and I've promised to marry you, and yet there isn't a bit of romance about it. You have never even saved my life."

Searcher: "I haven't, eh? Don't you remember the time you first saw me?"

"Yes. I was walking down the street, and you were learning to ride a bicycle."

"Yes, and I rang the bell for you to get out of the way, didn't I?"

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